

Reality Carpinteria - Pastor Britt Merrick
Mark 13:3-13
World Conditions in the Last Days
(17APR2005)

Bible Prophecy builds our faith, builds up our witness about God's Word, and builds up our love and obedience to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Topics Previously Discussed:

- What are the End Times
- What is Bible Prophecy
- How are we to view Bible Prophecy
- How are we to live in light of it

Short Review:

- Mark 13 sometimes referred to as The Olivet Discourse, since Jesus delivered this discourse on the Mount of Olives.
 - ¹ As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"
- The Jews were very proud of the Temple that King Herod had lavishly renovated for them. This Second Temple was beautiful to behold but it was spiritually empty.
- Jesus' assessment of Israel in the first century is provided throughout the Book of Mark. They had wonderful religious outward displays, but there was no inward reality.
 - It was a form of religion but it denied the power thereof.
 - With their lips they praised the Lord, but their hearts were far away.
 - ² And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."
- Jesus gave a prophecy of the destruction of the Second Temple.
- Previously, we outlined the First and Second Temple.
 - The building of the First Temple.
 - The conditional prophecy that was given by the Lord: "If you abide in Me and you do right, then the Temple will remain. If you disobey Me and ho after false gods, I will remove you form the land and destroy the Temple."
 - This prophecy was fulfilled some 300 years later with the destruction of the first temple.
 - The building of the Second Temple.
 - Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the Second Temple.
 - Once again, Israel has fulfilled the conditional prophecy of falling away from the Lord.
 - The Lord Jesus chastens them and talks about the Second temple's destruction.
 - This was fulfilled in 70 A.D.

A Private Briefing

- Mark 13 ³ As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,
- Peter, James and John made up the "inner circle" of the disciples.
 - These were the men Jesus chose to take along with Him on specials situations such as, the Mount of Transfiguration, special healings, etc.
 - This was not because God favored them in any special way.
 - The scriptures clearly state that God is not a respecter of persons.
 - Before the beginning of time, Jesus had prepared a special ministry for each of these men. Therefore, He invests in them differently.
 - Peter would become the pillar of the Church.
 - James would be the first martyr in the Church.

- John would live longer than any of the apostles. With the exception of the apostle Paul, John would write more New Testament books (including the Book of Revelation) than anyone else.
- The Lord continues to invest today in people within the Christian community. Many have been placed on a fast track of growth. They are growing spiritually and uprightly, like a well-nourished plant. God is pouring His Word into them; showing them secret (Jeremiah 33:3) and wonderful (Psalm 119:10) things; using them powerfully; and giving them opportunities.
- "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10
- These four apostles asked Jesus for a private prophetic briefing.

⁴ "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

- The apostles wanted to know specifically when the destruction of the Temple would take place and what signs should they be looking for.
- Mark 13 (37 verses) parallels Matthew 24, which has a few more details (51 verses).
- Matthew 24:3 and Mark 13:2 record the apostles as also asking:
 1. "When will the Temple be destroyed?"
 2. What will be the sign of Your Second Coming?
 3. What will be the sign of the End of the Age?
 - Jesus more or less ignored the first question. He did not give them the timing, but in Luke 21 (please read), Jesus gives them a clue. When they see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then Israel will be scattered and the time of the Gentiles will begin.
 - Jesus gives them a broad picture of the events, the situations and the world conditions that would exist just prior to His Second Coming.
 - In 70 A.D. the Romans under the leadership of Titus Vespasian destroyed the Second Temple 586 years after its completion.
 - Historical records say that they burned the House of the Lord. The interior of the Temple was filled and lined with gold and filled with gold articles. After the Romans burned the Temple, the Romans dismantled the Temple stone by stone in an effort to remove even the gold that had melted between each crevice.
 - Although the Temple was burned, Jesus statement that "not one stone would left be upon another" was fulfilled perfectly to the letter.

Thus far, God's prophecies have been literally, actually, physically and completely fulfilled.

Do not expect God's prophecies to be fulfilled spiritually, esoterically, or allegorically.

Expect all of His prophecies to be literally, actually, physically and completely fulfilled as well.

A Picture of the End of the Age

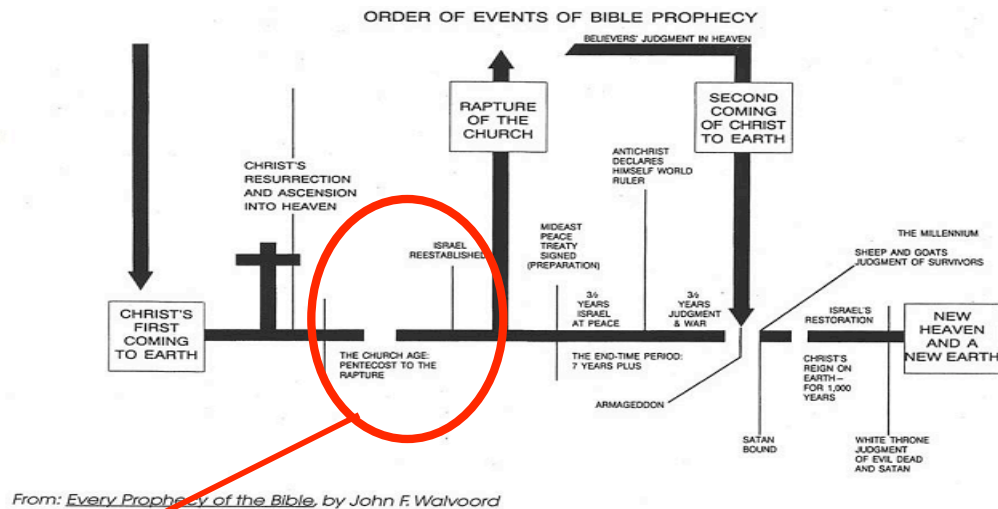
Mark 13:5-13

⁵ Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be afraid. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. ¹¹ Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

¹² "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ¹³ All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

- Jesus is defining world events, conditions and situations that will precede and coincide with His Second Coming and the end of the age.



The birth of the Church to the rapture of the Church - this is the period of history which Jesus refers to in Mark 13:5-13

- Some of the things relating to Bible Prophecy that Jesus states in these verses may cause fear in the hearts of some men. But God did not tell us these things to give us a spirit of fear.
 - God is not a God of confusion or fear.
 - God is love and perfect love casts out fear.
 - Bring all your fears to the Lord and He will cast them out.
 - God has a wonderful plan. He will unfold it perfectly. He will complete your salvation. And, He will set all things right.
 - There will be hard times, but God will work it all together for good.
 - You should be excited about Bible Prophecy. It is God pulling back the veil of time to show you something good.
 - God is totally in control. He knows the beginning from the end.
 - Recall when Jesus told the disciples to get in the boat and *go to the other side*.
 - That was a prophetic statement.
 - Jesus knew they would arrive on the other side, but He didn't tell them all the details that would occur in between.
 - Once at sea, things got a little scary and out of control for the disciples.
 - Jesus went and sat upon the mountain to pray and watch. At the right moment in time, He came walking on the water to rescue them.

Jesus walked upon the circumstances that seemed to threaten their lives!

- Jesus told them: they **would get to the other side**.
- God will accomplish everything that is right and good just like He said it would happen.

God will bring us to the other side!

As the world becomes a scary place, our job is to have faith in His Word.

At the appointed time, Jesus will come walking - - literally - - on the earth!

Words of Comfort

Mark 13:7 - do not be afraid/alarmed.

Mark 13:9 - be on your guard (be ready and not afraid).

Mark 13:11 - do not be anxious.

Mark 13:13 - the one who endures to the end will be saved.

- Verse 13 is not a salvific statement. It is not a condition for our salvation: that we've got to endure the events of the end times.
 - God is pointing out to us that as the world gets difficult, our job is to persevere, and to trust in God. He will rescue the righteous at the right time ==> The Rapture of the Church!

- John 16:33 Jesus said, "These things I have told you that you might have **peace**. In the world you will have tribulation (trouble), but take heart I have overcome the world."
 - When things start to happen, you will know that the Lord said it would happen.
 - God is control. Everything is cool.
 - God also warns us that in this world we will have difficult times.
 - But God will deliver us. He will save us. He will accomplish it at the right time.
 - We live in a fallen world. It has submitted itself to the influence of Satan. The consequences of man's actions are all around us.
- 1 Peter 5:10, "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you into His eternal glory in Christ will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."
 - God has called you to eternal glory.
 - God has not saved you just to allow you to slip out of His hands.
 - This is a prophetic statement and God will accomplish it.
 - God will strengthen and establish you.
 - Seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus lives to make intercession for us.
 - Heb 13:5, "I will never leave you nor will I forsake you."
 - Jesus will allow us to suffer for a little while, but He Himself will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish us.
- Luke 24, God Himself will come to us just like He came to the men on the road to Emmaus. They were hopeless, downtrodden and heartbroken and the Lord Himself met them on that road.
- At the Rapture of the Church, at the trump of God, the Lord Himself will descend and we will be caught up in the sky to meet Him. And we will forever be with the Lord.
- Jesus spoke of world events and situations that characterize these days, but His words should produce comfort and not fear.

Wars and Rumors of War

Mark 13 . ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be afraid. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

- Jesus said this in a time of relative world peace, Pax Romana. Shortly afterwards the world would be engulfed in war.
 - We have had thousands world conflicts since that time.
- The 20th Century (1900s) was the bloodiest century in the history of the world. It experienced many wars and much conflict and destruction.
 - Beginning with WWI (also known as the Great War) when a Serbian zealot killed the Archduke of Austria. Austria declared war on Serbia and, except for seven countries, they were followed into war by every nation in the world.
 - Some students of Bible Prophecy (such as Tim LaHaye) see a direct fulfillment of Mark 13:8 with this war.
 - By the close of the century, in the year 2000 alone, 100,000 men and women died in world conflicts.
 - In the year 2000, the UN had 14 ongoing peacekeeping missions. 28,000 troops from 38 different countries.
 - A three-fold increase from 1999.
 - Today, there are over 400,000 scientists employed to develop or improve current weaponry.

UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) reports that governments now spend more in four days preparing for war than in a year helping their neighbors. The annual budget of UNICEF is 75 million dollars, compared with 125 million dollars that is spent to build one modern submarine.

Nuclear weapons: Presently there are enough nuclear bombs in existence to equal 1.3 million Hiroshima explosions. The UN reports that the World's nuclear arsenals contain enough explosives to blast every man, woman & child off the Earth with the equivalent of 15 tons of TNT each. One nuclear submarine carries more explosive force than all the bombs and all the ammunition that have been exploded by all the nations in WWII.

- And yet, in verse 7 Jesus tells us do not be frightened. Don't be concerned. This is not yet the end.
 - The end of the world is not going to be in some nuclear exchange.

Mark 13: 8b there will be earthquakes in various places . . .

- From the beginning, there have always been earthquakes.
- The book of Revelation talks of profound earthquakes which will occur in the Tribulation.
- It is interesting that earthquakes will characterize the Last Days.
 - This **may** denote an increase in the frequency, magnitude, or range of geographical locations of earthquakes in a manner that can be calculated and assessed.

The National Earthquake Information Center

1970 – recorded 4,139 earthquakes
 1980 – recorded 7,348 earthquakes
 1990 – recorded 16,612 earthquakes
 2000 – recorded 22,256 earthquakes

- Jesus said, "In the Last Days there will be earthquakes in various places." It is just a defining factor of world conditions in the Last Days. It will happen in a manner that differentiates it from past history.
- Jesus **does not** say that in the Last Days He will **cause** these things to happen.
 - These **will** be the world events, conditions and situations.
 - We live in a world that is fallen, out of control and in rebellion to God. It lays under the influence of the Prince of the Power of the Air, Satan.

Mark 13:8c and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

- 790 million people in the world suffer from malnutrition.
- In spite of record high food production, more people go hungry than ever before. 460 million people are at the brink of starvation daily. About 200 million children yearly slip into some form of mental retardation & blindness due to lack of food.
- The WHO (World Health Organization) estimates that about 4 million people a year die of starvation, or about 30 people every minute.
- Again, Jesus **does not** say that in the Last Days He will **cause** these things to happen, but that these things **will** occur before His Coming.
- The end is not yet. These are merely "birth pangs"; defining marks of what will happen.
 - When a woman goes into labor, contractions and pains signal that something is coming. The child is not yet birth, but these things are a sure sign that the child is on the way.

These things are sure signs that the Lord is on His way!

Persecution

Mark 13:9-13

⁹"You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils . . . On account of me . . .¹¹ Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, **but the Holy Spirit**.

- We can see this fact about the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts, in Church history and in modern history.
 - Recommended Reading: The Heavenly Man written by Brother Yun with Paul Hattaway and Fox's Book of Martyrs, an account of martyrs from the book of Acts to the year 2000.
 - These books can change your life's perspective.
- Jesus said that in the world we would have persecution.
 - In America this is **alien** to us. We do not experience much real persecution. Ignorantly, we tend to confuse being ostracized, neglected, ignored and verbally abused with being persecuted for our faith. But, it is not the kind of persecution that Christians all over the world are experiencing because of their faith and the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - As Christians in America, we have been given much grace and opportunity. We have a great responsibility.
 - The Lord said, to whom much has been given, much would be required.
 - We have a responsibility to educate ourselves with regards to the Church worldwide.

- In China, persecution and murder is committed for professing faith in Jesus Christ.
 - The same is true in Somalia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, India and other countries.
 - In this modern day, Christians are being killed around the world for their belief in Jesus Christ!
 - Not mocked.
 - Not disenfranchised.
- BUT:**
- Murdered!
 - Killed!
 - Beheaded!
- The fact that we have been blessed does not give us a license for ignorance. God calls us to a responsibility and to action.

Mark 13 ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

Some Encouraging Facts:

- One of every 10 people in the planet is of the Bible reading/believing stream of Christianity.
- The number of believers in what used to be mission fields now surpasses the number of believers in the country from which missionaries were originally sent.
- More missionaries are being sent from non-Western churches than from the traditional mission-sending bases in the West.
- The Protestant growth rate in Latin America is well over three times the biological growth rate.
- Protestants in China grew from about 1 million to over 80 million believers in less than 50 years.
 - In sad contrast, in that same 50-year period the Church in America grew less than one percent!
- In the 1980s, Nepal was still a staunch Hindu kingdom with only a small persecuted church. Today there are hundreds of thousands of believers and churches have been started within each of the more than 100 distinct people groups.

Some Sobering Facts:

- There are over 2 billion people yet to be reached.
- There are people groups in whose dialect the Bible has not yet been translated.

There are people today who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ.

What are you going to do about it?

Missions: Go or Be a Sender

Mark 13 ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

Do you have a heart for the nations who have not heard of Jesus Christ?

What are you going to do about it?

Ask the Lord!

- Salvation is for the nations. God has a heart for the nations. He is concerned with all of them and not just America.
 - America is not even in the Bible!
- Every Christian should be involved in Missions work.
 - Either as one who is going or as one who is sending people.
 - You need to be involved and engaged in the Great Commission.
- If your heart is stirred towards a certain nation, ask God to send you.
- Pray that you may know if God would rather have you be a "sender".
 - You can provide spiritual and financial, logistical and practical help to a special missionary.
 - You are equally laying up treasures in heaven as the missionary whom you support.
 - When the Beama Seat of Christ comes, and the missionaries receive their rewards, you who sent will have a part in that reward.
- You can choose to do nothing and not be a doer of the Word.

- You can choose to do something and participate in the building of the kingdom of God.

Imposters and Deceivers

When Jesus was asked about the End Times, the first thing from His lips was a warning about the deceivers who would come claiming to be Him. Mark 13: ⁵ Jesus said to them: "See to it that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many.

- Out of compassion and love, out of a shepherd's and a Father's heart, Jesus tells his disciples to be careful not to get tricked in the Last Days.
- The Last Days will be characterized by spiritual deception, false doctrine and false teachings from outside of the Church and from **within** the Church!
- Jesus wants His disciples to be alert and aware. To see to it that they are not misled.
- The antonym to the phrase: "See to it", in Greek is to make blind. Without some effort on your part to not be deceived, then you are allowing yourself to be made blind.
 - This was not a mere suggestion from Jesus. But a severe warning for which we have to take responsibility.
 - 1 Timothy 4:1 "But the Spirit **explicitly** says that in the latter times, some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons . . . "
 - God is very concerned for us to be aware of this. He **clearly states** it and leaves **no room** for implications.
 - Some will fall away from the faith because they paid attention to; they tampered with, and listened to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.
 - The New Testament speaks of **one** doctrine, the Doctrine of Grace.
 - We are saved by grace through faith.
 - Demons have multiple doctrines manifested primarily in the ideology and false religious idea that many ways lead to God.
 - The New Age movement is very prevalent and strong, and many people believe in it.
 - There are New Age Churches in our communities.
 - They talk about how great and wonderful Jesus was and that He was a great prophet and amazing teacher. In fact, they will profess to love the Lord.

But, they are not talking about the same Jesus Christ in the Bible!

- They do not worship Jesus as God incarnate.
- They do not adhere to the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ.
- They have listened to doctrines of demons.
- Demons will declare to us that there are multiple ways to be saved.
 - They want to defame and destroy Jesus. To mar the image of Jesus they mar, beat, maim and destroy humanity.
 - It is the Lie from the Pit of Hell!

It is Jesus Christ and Jesus Alone. He is the Only Way to God the Father!

No one ever offered to die for you and predicted His own resurrection from the dead other than Jesus Christ!

If you do not believe this, then you are not saved.

If you are a Christian, have already become a Christian or think you are one, and you somehow decide in your reading of the Bible or your investigation of religions that there's got to be more than one way to God other than Jesus Christ, **then YOU WERE NEVER SAVED!**

Romans 10:9 states that if we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, then we shall be saved.

- "Confess that Jesus is Lord" – that He is the Master of the creation and universe - - He is God!

- “Believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead” – that Jesus is God’s only unique Son, the only unique Savior of the world.
- People can come to Jesus in ignorance. Many get saved never fully understanding the doctrine of Grace, the things of the cross or the deity of Christ. They just know: “I’m a sinner. I need to be saved. Jesus, You are the Savior, save me!” And they are saved.
- But, if someone who claims to be a Christian somehow decides that there are other ways and they profess that there are other ways, **they are not saved**.

There is ONE WAY and He is Jesus Christ!

Don’t Call it Christianity!

Mark 13: ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.

- Many people in the Last Days will be claiming to be Christ.
 - Christ – Greek for the Hebrew word Mashiach, or Messiah.
- No one can be the Messiah but Jesus, who is the only one who fulfilled all the prophecies.

A Syracuse University professor, who researched the contemporary religious situation in America, announced that there are over 2,000 practicing gurus calling themselves Christ.

- First, this is nonsensical, stupid and ridiculous because the Messiah had to be a Jew!
 - Second, he had to be born of a virgin, in Bethlehem! He had to grow up in Nazareth of Galilee.
 - And, most importantly, He had to fulfill all the prophecies about the Messiah.
- Scariest than people believing that they are the “messiah” is the fact that there are people who are following these false messiahs!
- People in our very own communities believe in false messiahs today and this belief comes directly from demons.
- Combat the Lie with the Truth, the Word of God, which is the Sword of the Spirit.
 - When the Church gathers together to pray it is a declaration of war against the kingdom of darkness.
 - Learn the Truth. Stand on the Truth. Proclaim the Truth.

We have got to tear down every lofty speculation that exalts itself against the knowledge of God by praying and speaking the Truth! (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

- Lies are in the Church and in its leadership.

* A survey taken of 520 clergy & laymen of the NCC (National Council of Churches) showed that only a little over half believed Jesus to be divine, & only 62% believe in an afterlife.
 * McCall Magazine took a survey of 3,000 Protestant clergymen. The article stated, “A considerable number rejected altogether the idea of a personal God. A majority of the youngest group cannot be said to believe in a Virgin birth or to regard Jesus as divine.”

A survey of pastors who do not believe in the physical, literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead:

51%	Methodist
35%	Presbyterians
33%	Baptist
30%	Episcopalian

- Paul the apostle wrote in 1 Corinthians 15: ¹² Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

**If Jesus Christ did not physically and literally rise from the dead,
then we of all people are the most to be pitied
because our faith is in vain and there is no hope for eternity!**

- There are many leaders within the Church today who call themselves Christian and are denying this doctrine.

DON'T CALL IT *THE CHURCH*. DON'T CALL IT *CHRISTIANITY*!

The Barna Research Group took a poll of 601 randomly selected **senior** pastors representing some 50 denominations. It showed that only **51%** of them held a Biblical worldview, defined as their agreeing to the following:

1. They would agree with and embrace the accuracy of biblical teaching (that the Bible is true).
2. They would agree with the sinless nature of Jesus.
3. They believe in the literal existence of Satan.
4. They believe in the omnipotence and omniscience of God.
5. They believe in salvation by grace alone.
6. They believe in personal responsibility to evangelize.

Only 51% of Christian Senior Pastors hold to the above beliefs!

Barna also states that only 9% of people who characterized themselves as “born again” held a biblical worldview.

The six definitions noted above are just the core essentials of Christianity. It does not list all of them! These are just some of the core essentials of the historic Christian faith.

If you reject the core essentials, don't call it Christianity!

2 Peter 2:1 states, ¹ But false prophets also arose **among** the people, just as there will also be false teachers among **you** (*the Church*), who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even **denying the Master who bought them**, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. ² Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; ³ and in their greed they will exploit you (*the Church*) with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

God will judge the false teachers in the Church.

James 3:1, Let not many of you become teachers because as such you will incur a stricter judgment.

The Last Days will be characterized by:

Doctrines of demons taught by people from without and within the Church. And within the Church a people will arise who do not want to hear the Truth anymore.

- 2 Timothy 4: ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Say What?! – Become a Berean

Acts 17¹⁰ 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 Spirit of God called the Bereans “more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica”
 - They received the Word with great eagerness. They wanted to hear the Word of God. They wanted to hear about the Messiah.
 - When Paul was done teaching at the end of the day, they examined the scriptures to see if the things that had been said lined up with the Word of God.
 - The Bible says that they were noble-minded for checking on what someone said against the Word of God.

- The Bible does not commend you for listening to a man. The Bible commends you for listening to the Word of God.
- Any Bible teaching that you hear, if it sounds suspicious or you're just not sure, you need to open up the Word of God and investigate it.

**If the words of the preacher, teacher or pastor does not line up with the Word of God
reject the word, reject him and reject the ministry.**

The Word of God will testify against us if we ever depart from it.

Benefits of Being a Berean

- After examining the scriptures, the Bereans believed.
 - Many Christians today believe that by examining the scriptures they will be let down.
 - The Bible may not stand up to scrutiny.
 - They may find contradictions.
 - There may be errors.

The Bible is not afraid of anyone.

Search it freely. Search it daily.

- It is not a sin to have questions. What you do with those questions determines whether it's a sin or an act of faith.
 - If you just let those questions dwell in your mind, the enemy is sure to come and add lies and deception to those questions. All he needs is the tiniest doubt on your part to plant the seeds of deception and more doubt.

Investigate the Word of God and find answers to your questions.

Strengthen your faith.

Verify the validity of the Bible for yourself.

It's your responsibility to be a Berean.

Josh McDowell - a great young mind. He did not believe the New Testament as being valid. Being an intellectual and a student, he endeavored to dispute it. He investigated it thoroughly. The result is he got saved and is now a great defender of the Bible.

Sir William Ramsey - a historian of the highest esteem. In the Gospel of Luke and in the Book of Acts, Luke claimed to be giving a historical account of events in his writings. Ramsey did not believe that Luke was a historian or that the events Luke wrote about were historical. Being a great historian and archeologist himself, Ramsey went on a journey of the places recorded by Luke and investigated the events. At the end of his journey, Ramsey pronounced Luke as the greatest historian the world has ever known and every word of the New Testament is true. And, he became a great defender of the faith.

The Bible is not afraid of you.

Investigate it.

Be educated in these Last Days

Certain government agencies teach their employees to spot counterfeit dollars by forcing them to study every single aspect of the real dollars. They are never shown counterfeit dollars. They become so acquainted with the real thing that when the counterfeit ones show up they know it isn't genuine.

We have been given a wonderful gift and responsibility: Study the Word of God.

When the deceptions come you will know it in an instant. You can stand up and tear down any lofty speculation that results itself against the knowledge of God.

**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God,
as a workman that need not be ashamed, but handles accurately the word of truth. (2 Tim 2:15)**

Labor in the Word of God and Love the God of The Word.

Study Questions:

1. The disciples were proud of their Temple; the Pharisees were proud of their outward displays of religiosity. These appearances were meant to glorify God to the people. In what way(s) would God want us to glorify Him?
2. The Scriptures say that, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared *for those who love Him*." God calls each one of us, young and old to become involved in spreading His gospel and ministering to the saints. He has laid out special plans for us since before the foundation of the world. How much are you willing to become part of His "inner circle" and allow Him to invest in, nurture and develop you to fulfill those plans?
3. What do you think of when you hear reports of people around the world being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ? How can you put a face to their plight?
4. Does your church have a Missions ministry? In what ways can you help support its goals?
5. How can we combat the lie of false doctrine that declares that Jesus is not the only way to God?
6. Do we have a responsibility to confront "Christians" who believe in a merciful God who would lovingly provide more than one way to heaven for their friends, family or for themselves?
7. What are some of the ways in which we are being called to defend the Christian faith today? What is the best weapon we have?
8. What are the benefits to being a Berean of the Word? Have you ever searched God's Word to see if something you heard or read was correctly stated? Do you think that Christians should hold pastors, Bible teachers, and each other accountable for the way they use the Word of God?