

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby
we may
edify one
another.

John 8:32 And
ye shall know
the truth and
the truth shall
make you free.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

July
2
2017

Anna Surface 2010

READINESS OF MIND

by L.A. Stauffer

After the apostle Paul departed from the city of Thessalonica, he left behind a few believers, but the Jews in general had closed their minds to the message that “Jesus is the Christ.” These Jews had access in their synagogue to scrolls of Old Testament scriptures. Paul preached from these scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth died for their sins and arose from the dead to prove He is the Messiah the prophets of their nation had anticipated for centuries. Although a few men of that city believed, a host of rabble rousers closed their minds, refused to countenance such an idea, stirred up persecution against the saints, and forced the apostle to “get out of town” late one night (**see Acts 17:1-9**).

Paul made his way some 50 miles down the road to the city of Berea. Again, as was his custom, Paul entered a synagogue of the Jews and began the same process over—alleging and demonstrating from the Old Testament scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. The apostle found among these Jews open and receptive hearts—men who honestly and eagerly examined the scriptures Paul read in their midst. Luke tells us that these men of Berea not only received Paul’s teaching, but they daily examined the scriptures to determine *“whether these things were so”* (**Acts 17:11**).

When Luke commends the nobility of these Bereans, he made specific note not only of their study habits but also their *“readiness of mind”* (**Acts 17:11**). This attitude was prerequisite and fundamental to their willingness to examine and study the scriptures daily. The word *“readiness”* combines a preposition “before” and the word “mind” to describe the mindset of the Bereans before their study of the scriptures even began. The “mind” is essential to man’s examination or study of the scriptures, but its “before” condition determines whether that study ever takes place. The mind, as the Greek word suggests, must be “ready.”

The minds of the Jews at Berea, as Jews everywhere, were conditioned by scripture to anticipate at some point in their history the arrival of a Messiah—

an anointed savior. Hundreds, even thousands, of years had passed since the first prophecies of the coming Messiah and many Jews had become lethargic and indifferent about its prospects. Others were so misinformed that Jesus didn’t fit the pattern of their thinking and was dismissed as perverse and false.

The Bereans, however, were different. They were both excited about the claim and the scriptures that proved it. When Paul unrolled the scrolls of the Old Testament writings and announced Jesus as the Messiah, their minds were “ready,” “eager,” and “prepared” to examine the prophecies and Paul’s application of them to Jesus.

Would it not be wonderful today if every one of us who claim to be Christians was this eager to grow in Bible knowledge and Christ-like character? If we were, we would daily open our Bibles, examine verses and chapters, and answer a few simple questions that are designed to prepare our hearts for Sunday and Wednesday Bible studies and our lives for eager service in God’s kingdom.

Think, brethren, how much each of us would grow in wisdom and stature with God; think of the knowledge and strength we would gain in preparation for living in an ungodly world of sin; think of the deepened faith we would have in God and in His word; think of the love and care we would begin to show one another; and think of the zeal and enthusiasm we would have to teach sinners.

When Bereans had this kind of mind, God called them *“noble”*—a word that means of “high rank.” That’s who we’d be in God’s kingdom. Not only an *“elect race,”* a *“holy nation,”* a *“royal priesthood,”* but also “noble citizens” ranking high in the mind of God. How special would that be, brethren?

Jump Start 1817

2 Peter 3:3 "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,

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and saying, 'where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.'"

One of the hymns we sing, begins with, "Troublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear..." This is nothing new. This is the very thought behind Peter's words. Trouble is coming. Be ready. Don't be shocked. It does us well to give some thought to these words.

First, Peter says, "Mockers will come." That alone bothers us. We want God to stop the mockers. Peter says that they will come. This is nothing more than another attack by Satan upon God's people. **Rev. 12** ends with the sober words that the dragon went to wage war against those who hold the testimony of Jesus. So mockers will come. They come in many sizes and in many colors. Some are nothing more than college professors who think that their studies have given them the answers to all things in life. Religion, and specifically, Christianity in it's purest form, has no place in the thinking man's world. They will use every opportunity to criticize, blast, and mock followers of Christ. Mockers come in the form of the Hollywood elite. They, too, think that they have great insight into all matters of life. Their words, they feel, need to be heard more than any one else. Mockers are found within our families. The internet is packed full of mockers. They come.

Second, the mockers come with their mocking. That seems to be an odd way of stating that. It seems redundant. Mockers certainly are not going to spread the truth. Mockers are not going to praise all things good and right. They mock because they are mockers. Peter is letting the brethren know these things. Don't be shocked. Don't be surprised at the ridiculous, inaccurate, and even dumb things that people state. Mockers and their mocking will come.

Third, what they say is not right. Their view of history is distorted and wrong. They claim that nothing has changed since creation. Everything has remained the same. Always has been and always will be. They look to the past and falsely assume that's proof that things will always be the same in the future. Even in their observable world they should know better. Trees die. Rivers change courses. Volcanoes erupt. Landslides change the shape of hills and valleys. Things have not always been the same. Peter reminds them of the flood. He says "it escapes their notice." Maybe. Maybe they don't want to believe. By the word of the Lord God created. By the word of the Lord, the floods came and changed the world. And by that same word of the Lord, the present world will be destroyed by fire. The proof is in God's word.

Because things have always been a certain way in the past does not mean that they will always be that way in the future. The source and the proof of their

mocking was what they could see with their eyes. Their vision was tainted. They were not seeing things clearly. They had forgotten the word of the Lord.

What Peter does here is to answer their inaccurate claims. What they said simply isn't so. They were wrong. Peter gives proof. His proof is with the word of God. That word, never changes.

Don't be afraid when someone challenges and mocks what you believe. Like the mockers in Peter's day, what they say is not true. God's word is always right.

Fourth, Peter then uses this occasion to address believers. He said that *"it escaped the notice"* of the mockers, but later he writes, *"do not let this one fact escape your notice..."* Don't be like the mockers. Don't forget what God said. We stand with mockers when we allow reason and our limited observations to conquer what God's word says. Stand with God and His word. We know because God said.

People like to blow smoke. They say a bunch of stuff without proof. The shallow in faith crumble at such things. Those that stand upon the word of God can see right through it. There is nothing to their claims. Most times, mockers are inconsistent, lacking proof and thriving at being loud and repeating old charges that pokes holes in people's faith.

There are two things this section brings together for the believer.

First, know that mockers will come.

Second, know the word of God. Do not let this one fact escape your notice, Peter says.

So, this again reminds us that we need to have the word of God in us. Not only will it build our faith, but it will fortify us against those that mock. We know what is right. We know where we stand. We know God.

It seems that mockers are miserable. They don't want faith and they don't want others to have faith either. They seem to want the world to dwell in the present without any hope, any help and without God. Such a life is sad, without purpose and going no where. Mockers don't offer a pretty picture. Their world is gloom and doom. Selfishness is the core and goodness won't survive. The only persuasion of mockers is that the Gospel is wrong so there is no other alternative. There is no attractive nature to the world of mockers. There is no incentive to want to join them. Life isn't better because of their ways. Life without God is dark and doomed. Death is seen as a pleasant way out of this agony and pain. But they learn too late, that death isn't the end. They learn that they have believed a lie. They learn that "their gospel" has been false.

God is. God remembers His promises. God is good. God's timetable is not the same as ours. So things continue on for generations. That does not mean God has forgotten His promises. He never does. These same mockers should have studied the prophets. They

should have looked at the promises to Abraham. God kept His word. He always does. Mockers thrive because they don't know nor understand God's word. They simply don't get it and as a result they build a whole system against something that they never understood to begin with.

I know whom I have believed, are the words of Paul. They ought to be our words as well. We stand upon the word of God. Wolves come who appear to be sheep, but they are not. Satan prowls like a lion. Mockers come. None of these things surprise us. None of these things move us. They will come. They will go. God remains!

by Roger Shouse jumpstartsdaily.com

PEACE AND A SWORD

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:34-37).

Jesus was divisive in His life, work, teaching, and demands. He remains so. How can it be otherwise? His truth is infinite; it is absolute; it is nonnegotiable. His troublesome teachings will often bring conflict to families. Tempers can flare, feelings are hurt, and relationships are shattered. Here is an example from Ethiopia. A young man, a former Muslim, heard, learned, and obeyed the gospel. He was immediately shunned by his family. He was soon blind. While it could be hard to prove that his family blinded this loved one in retaliation for his faith in Christ, the evidence points that way. We don't think about such drastic measures being done here in our country. Remember, though, that the world we live in is not the *norm*.

Should we be surprised when alienation and ostracism come our way? No! Is Jesus concerned about feelings of love and concern in the family structure? Yes. Is His objective to tear families apart? No. Yet, when we embrace His mission to save the world; we begin to see how separations might occur. Jesus doesn't call the righteous to repentance; He calls sinners (**Matthew 9:13**). When those sinners (you and I) begin walking with the Savior, our friends and family will often recoil in horror; they will laugh and sneer; sometimes they will turn away.

Jesus' words echo Micah 7:6: *"For son dishonors father, Daughter rises against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household."* Jesus doesn't want families to be divided. Yet He knows and says that this is what will happen when men and women choose to follow Him. In that sense He *causes* the perpetual strife and alienation that follows the true disciples. Do we experience the ridicule of those around us? Maybe we

haven't made it clear who we are, who we are following, and how we are supposed to be living. Maybe we have blurred the line of demarcation between the world we actually live in and the world we are supposed to live in. But, after all, who wants to be alienated from one's family?

The Roman Empire was a kingdom of death. Citizens dispersed throughout the vast territories of Caesar were well acquainted with fighting, torture, and crucifixions. Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of death, too. When we take up our crosses, we are dying to self. When we walk daily with the Master, we carry a cross with us—ours and the cross of Jesus. That cross, when accepted, brings death; it also brings life. The sword of the cross will separate families because not all families are worthy of Christ. They are not worthy of His cross. They are not worthy because they would rather have the peace of this world rather than the peace of Christ - the peace that comes even from dying.

Randy Harshbarger

I Don't Believe in "Karma"!

For the last several years, but especially since 'Boy George' popularized it in a song, everybody's been talking about 'karma'. We see posts on Face Book about "Instant Karma" where someone does something stupid and immediately suffer for it. To be completely honest I kind of like those posts where a driver of an expensive vehicle parks over two spaces so "Their 'Baby' will not be scratched." Then two guys with pickups park so close to him he can't open either door, but I digress. The point I am making is that 'karma' is part of an eastern mystic philosophy. I am not an eastern mystic. I am a Christian whose religion and world view are grounded in reality and informed by the scriptures. How do I look at events like this? There are several scriptures which come to mind the most prominent of which is **Galatians 6:7,8**, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."* We might also think of **Matthew 7:12**, the Golden Rule. *"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets."* Our ancestors, not so long ago, would say "You reap what you sow," and give a blank stare to the word 'karma'. The message is that the more we use words from false religions and the philosophies of men to describe even the similar concepts contained in Christianity the more likely we are to fall for the completely false concepts therein. So "No! I do not believe in 'karma'"

Cleveland Redding

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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We offer Correspondence Courses

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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION (1)



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10