

Sermon Mark S. Aites

APOLLOS

(Source Material: *An Album of Bible Characters*, by John Waddey)

TEXT: ACTS 18:24-28

INTRODUCTION:

1. A.T. Robertson, whose works are noted for studies in the Greek, wrote of Apollos: "A man who could divide honors with Paul is worthy of study."
2. Apollos was from Alexandria in Egypt, which in that time was the cultural center of North Africa and the Near East.
3. It was a city that was founded by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C., which subsequently led to the city being named after him.
4. The city was renowned for its great university and huge library of some 900,000 volumes. In that time it was second to none.
5. History informs us that some 100,000 Jews lived there.
6. It was Alexandria that was the place of the origin of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament, which is known as the Septuagint.
7. The Jewish philosopher Philo was known to have taught in that city.
8. Because Alexandria was such a prominent cultural center, that through that area of the world, Hellenism had a great effect upon Judaism.
 - 1) When we speak of *Hellenism* we are speaking of Jews who adopted the Greek culture; which included the Greek tongue, ideas, and practices.
 - 2) In **Acts 6:1** it speaks of the Grecian widows who were neglected in the daily ministrations.
 1. Remember at that time the Gentiles had not yet been included in God's scheme of redemption (**cf. Acts 10**).
 2. These Grecian widows were those who had adopted the Greek way of life.
 - 3) Alexandria was the source of much of this cultural change among Jews.
12. Christianity soon became a part of that community. Teachers the early church fathers mention such as Clement and Origen worked in that city.
13. Unfortunately, history reveals to us that by the time of the 3rd and 4th centuries, serious doctrinal problems did develop in Alexandria.
14. In fact, it was from Alexandria, that efforts were made to teach Scripture by what we refer to as an allegorical method.
 - 1) An *allegory* means to set forth one thing to represent something else.
 - 2) Using that method in many passages which were intended to be taken literally, did untold damage to the church.

DISCUSSION:

I. APOLLOS: THE PREACHER.

- A. **Acts 18:24** speaks of Apollos as an eloquent man.
 1. The Greek word lit. means "fluent; hence, an orator."
 2. He apparently was gifted in the ability to speak with great power.
 3. We observe also that he was *mighty in the Scriptures*.
 4. The word translated *mighty* has its root word in *dunamis* or dynamite.
 5. In **Rom. 1:16**, Paul refers to the Gospel of Christ as the *power of God unto*

salvation.

6. In **Acts 18:24**, Apollos is said to be mighty or powerful in the Scriptures.
 7. This would imply that he was very familiar with the Old Testament law and the teaching of the prophets.
 8. A person can not be mighty or powerful in the Scriptures with a broad a thorough knowledge of them.
 9. As we consider Apollos, we can say that he was doubly blessed: both with his knowledge of the Scriptures, and also his ability to communicate that to his listeners.
 10. This again reminds me of **Neh. 8:8**, and what was said concerning the Levites: *So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*
 11. Apollos had this ability which made him a valuable asset to the Lord's work.
- B. **vs 25** indicates that he was *instructed in the way of the Lord*.
1. Here was a student of God's word, a man who was searching for the truth.
 2. **Matt. 5:6** *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*
- C. We also learn in **Acts 18:25** that Apollos was *fervent in spirit*.
1. This indicates that he was bubbling over in enthusiasm and zeal.
Rom. 12:11 *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*
 2. Now we can say that he was triply blessed, not only in knowledge, and preaching, but also in being an individual with zeal for the Lord.
 3. What a tremendous asset this would be to the Lord's church in our own day and time!
- D. It also says of Apollos: *he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord*.
1. He taught diligently or accurately those things which he knew in the word of God.
 2. Granted, it is qualified here in the text that at this point in his life, he knew only of the baptism of John.
 3. But the principle is there, that this was a man who endeavored to teach the word of God, as we would say, "right down the line."
 4. Those of us who teach must be diligent and careful that what we teach is the truth.
2 Tim. 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
- E. **Acts 18:26** indicates that Apollos spoke the word of God with boldness.
1. We find this to be the same with the apostles (**Acts 4:13**).
 2. Let's not misunderstand this trait. Boldness is not being rude and crude, nor is it ranting and raving.
 3. To preach the word of God with boldness is to preach it courageously, just as God intended it, without it being watered down or compromised.
 4. This is certainly something that every teacher needs to hear, that we might present God's word, without fear or favor, and yet still preach it in love (**Eph. 4:15**).
- F. One other factor that needs to be considered, is that Apollos was courageous enough to present God's truth in the synagogues.
1. This is sort of troubling simply because in our own time, Christians are very timid and afraid to present the truth of God's Word.
 2. Think of the courage and conviction, not only to preach the truth, but to do it, say, in

a denomination.

3. Some of our brethren, through the years, have received invitations to preach in pulpits of denominational churches.
4. This is acceptable on the condition that the truth be preached, that it not be watered down or compromised.
5. For too long, we have allowed our fear of what others might think or say, or that others may become upset with us, to prevent us from preaching the truth of Jesus Christ.

II. APOLLOS AS A PERSON.

- A. As we look closely at this man of God, we find Luke's commentary, that Apollos knew only *the baptism of John*.
 1. This is similar to the account of **Acts 19:1-5**, in which a limited knowledge was confessed, as they had not heard of the Holy Spirit.
 2. While John's baptism was for repentance for the remission of sins, it was not in the name of Christ.
- B. Noting again **18:26**: *And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*
 1. This is impressive in that a powerful orator like Apollos, was willing to listen to people who could be classified as non-professional.
 2. Here is a tent maker and his wife telling this preacher the way of God more perfectly or accurately.
 3. This has often been a weakness of preachers, and in some cases elders, who cannot receive correction.
 4. The application we can draw from this is that we are never too old to learn.
- C. And really, it is not just Apollos in that matter that should be admired, but Aquilla and Priscilla who had enough courage, conviction, and love for the truth to correct this man of God.
 1. It is a tragedy when the word of God is not preached in truth, and elders and members of the Lord's body refusing to say a word.
 2. It is not that we seek, in this matter, to be haughty and arrogant, but to lovingly correct someone who is teaching falsely.

III. APOLLOS AND THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.

18:27-28 *And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:*

18:28 *For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.*

- A. As Apollos traveled, we observe that he was carrying with him a letter of recommendation from the brethren.
 1. We would do well to consider this ourselves, as this would help us to identify those who are holding to sound doctrine, and those who are teaching falsely.
 2. Many a congregation of the Lord's church has been hurt immeasurably by hastily

hiring a man without carefully checking his background.

3. There have been quite a number of instances where men were hired based upon what they saw and heard, without having any idea of where that person was coming from and were they sound in the faith.

B. **vs 27** notes that he *helped them much*.

1. Here was a worker and church builder, which stands in strong contrast to a demolition expert.
2. What Paul had planted, Apollos watered and God gave the increase (**1 Cor. 3:6**).

C. We further can admire Apollos in his relationship to the brethren at Corinth, in that, even though his name is mentioned (in **1 Cor. 1:12**), there is no indication from Paul that he was party to the discord in that congregation.

1. If you recall, the brethren had a problem with preacheritis.
2. Some favored Apollos, likely because of his tremendous oratory skill.
3. But Apollos did not support such efforts, which is reasonable to assume, since Paul did not condemn him for such an action.

IV. APOLLOS THE APOLOGIST.

18:28 *For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.*

A. The word translated *convinced*, in effect means that he argued them down.

1. They apparently were not able to stand up against his knowledge and logical presentation of God's word.
2. Apollos defended the truth, something which we desperately need today.
3. Some have seen it as confrontational and unloving to debate the Scriptures, but even Paul said that he was *set for the defense of the gospel* (**Phil. 1:16**).

B. Seeing that the truth is going to need to be defended until our Lord comes again, then it is important that we prepare ourselves to give a defense of our faith.

1. **1 Pet. 3:15** *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*
2. The word *answer* is from the Greek word *apologia*, which means to give a defense.
3. Since it is Scriptural to uphold and defend the truth, then we should prepare ourselves so that we can do it.

CONCLUSION:

1. Apollos was truly an admirable preacher of God's Word.
2. We need good men like him to stand up and be counted among the faithful preachers of the Lord's church.
3. We need men and women like Aquilla and Priscilla to prepare themselves to be able to lovingly correct others so that the word of God is taught truthfully and accurately.
4. Hopefully, this lesson will help to inspire you to take a more active role in preparing yourself to defend the truth.