



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Apollos Proves that Jesus is the Christ

JANUARY 31, 2019

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Acts 18:24-28 *Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. 25) This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; 26) and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27) And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he helped greatly those who had believed through grace; 28) for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. (NASB)*

“EPHESUS WAS A COPY OF ROME: AND WE SEE WHY IT ECLIPSED NOT ONLY CORINTH BUT EVEN ANTIOCH IN THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL. IT WAS THE STEPPING-STONE TO ROME; BECAUSE IT REFLECTED IN ITSELF THE ‘POWER OF DARKNESS,’ THE KINGDOM OR ‘COURSE OF THIS WORLD,’ WHICH HAD ITS CAPITAL IN ROME.”

RICHARD RACKHAM

How was Apollos similar to Paul? What was the teaching style of Apollos? In what way would the Jews have viewed this visiting rabbi from Alexandria? How is Priscilla and Aquila an example of how to best correct or calibrate a public leader? What was the impact of the ministry of Apollos in Corinth?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- FEBRUARY 7: ACTS 19:1-7 *THE NECESSITY OF BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST*

- FEBRUARY 14: ACTS 19:8-10 *CHRIST’S STRATEGY TO REACH ALL ASIA MINOR THROUGH PAUL*

While Paul was “*strengthening all the disciples*,” in the churches he had planted, Luke, the author of Acts, remains focused on Ephesus, the capital of all of Asia Minor. It was favored with good climate, fertile soil and a natural harbor fed by the Cayster River. The temple of Diana, next to the harbor, was the largest building in world of that day and the first such monumental building to be made entirely of solid marble. This made it not only the greatest of the seven wonders of the world, but a most popular shrine of pagan pilgrimage. The temple was serviced by a powerful hierarchy of thousands of priests promoting the worship of nature and fertility. The citizens of Ephesus showed their gratitude for this tourist attraction and means of wealth by granting the pagan cult official support and worship. This made the worship of Diana the establishment religion of the city. Such official sanction brought with it the dark side of immorality with an authorized brothel and black magic with demonism. Politically, it controlled a large area with many strategic capitals and large cities, competing for dominance, including the cities of the other six churches in Revelation 2-3. The proconsul governing this country enjoyed twice the number of lictors as their Executive Protection Unit. Commercially, it was the largest trade center west of the Taurus Mountains, “the gem of Asia.”

“EPHESUS, CLEARLY PAUL’S GOAL, WAS A VERY IMPORTANT CENTRE, THE MAJOR CITY OF THE PROVINCE OF ASIA.” BRUCE MILNE

I. THE CREDENTIALS OF APOLLOS ACTS 18:24-25

Apollos was a Jewish rabbi, unparalleled in his education, incredibly brilliant and unusually gifted as an orator, even above the apostles. His expertise was acquired through natural gifts, the greatest educational opportunity and

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 6TH FLOOR SPEAKER’S CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 6TH FLOOR SPEAKER’S CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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diligent scholarship. He was born in Alexandria, the second largest city and the leading intellectual center in the Roman Empire, containing a massive museum and the largest library in the world, housing between 400,000 and a half-million volumes. Over a million Jews lived in Egypt, Alexandria being the capital, two of the five districts of the city were Jewish, enjoying their own constitution. Most of the Jews, and all the world spoke Greek, so it is here that 70 scholars had created their own Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (LXX), making it also their international religious training center. Apollos had excelled at this Oxford of his day and was both “eloquent” and “mighty in the Scriptures.” The Old Testament being his singular diligent focus, past and present, so that he was literally, “continually having been instructed in the way of the Lord.” We know he was a true believer because he was “fervent in the Spirit” (Holy Spirit) and “he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus.” Thus, he was a powerful preacher.

“HIS LEARNING AND ELOQUENCE, COUPLED WITH HIS POWERFUL TREATMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, MADE APOLLOS A DEVASTATING DEBATER ... NO ONE ELSE IS SO DESIGNATED AS POWERFUL IN DEALING WITH THE SCRIPTURES. THE CHURCH TODAY IS IN DESPERATE NEED OF MEN LIKE APOLLOS.” JOHN MACARTHUR

II. THE CORRECTION OF APOLLOS ACTS 18:25-26

Aquila and Priscilla were still attending the synagogue in Ephesus and had the privilege of hearing Apollos “speak out boldly.” He was passionately and skillfully pointing these Jews to Jesus, but he lacked important information because he was “acquainted only with the baptism of John.” He proclaimed the same true message as John the Baptist, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Mt 3:2) matching exactly the same message of repentance from sin as Jesus Christ (Mt 4:17). John had proclaimed that Jesus was the sacrificial lamb, the only means by

which God could forgive our sin, “Behold, The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). John the Baptist had also proclaimed, “this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God” (Jn 1:33-34). The response of John’s disciples who then followed Jesus was, “We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ)” (Jn 1:41). Apollos had a lot correct, but he had not heard the words of Christ after his resurrection, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). These tentmakers, Priscilla and Aquila, had the courage to help instruct this top educated rabbi, but they did it carefully. No public words or even words to others, only in an implied environment of loving privacy and delicious hospitality (probably why Priscilla is listed first), they “took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” Humble Apollos was happy to learn from them and be helped by them as every leader should do.

“THE POWERFUL APOLLOS, REFUTING THE JEWS THROUGH SCRIPTURE, RESEMBLES STEPHEN, WHOSE OPPONENTS COULD NOT WITHSTAND ‘THE WISDOM AND THE SPIRIT BY WHICH HE WAS SPEAKING’ (6:10).” DAVID PETERSON

III. THE CONQUERING BY APOLLOS ACTS 18:27-28

Probably Apollos heard about the success of Paul and the struggles of the church in Corinth from Aquila and Priscilla and he wanted to help. Thus the church men wrote a letter to commend him to the church at Corinth. So Apollos went and helped them. Possibly Crispus, the former ruler of the synagogue, was not as brilliant at debate as Sosthenes, the current ruler of the synagogue, so the truth was not defended that well. When Apollos arrived, no one could overcome his arguments from “the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.” It is probably at this point that Sosthenes became a believer and maybe the wealthiest man in the world, Erastus the Treasurer.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Is your most persistent and studied focus like Apollos in “continually having been instructed in the way of the Lord?”
- 2) Are you humble enough to listen to and even be corrected by those who may not match your education or status?
- 3) Is the help that you are providing others temporal/political or do you have the boldness to give others eternal truth?