

Woodland Baptist Church

November 28, 2012 - Wednesday Night in the Word

Acts 18:22-28 - Apollos the Alexandrian Jew

1) OPENING REMARKS

- a) **1 Corinthians 3:4-9** - 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human? 5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, **Apollos watered**, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 **He who plants and he who waters are one**, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

2) READ ACTS 18:22-28

3) **Verses 22-23** Believers need to **CORRESPOND** and **STRENGTHEN** each other

- a) **22** When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. **23** After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

- i) 18:22 Verse 21 ends with Paul sailing from Ephesus. Verse 22 has him landing in Palestine (Caesarea) and visiting the church in Jerusalem ("he went up," theologically speaking) and then (down) to Antioch of Syria. It must be remembered that Luke is not recording a daily exhaustive travel itinerary, but jumping from one significant theological event to another. Acts is not modern history, but it is a good, accurate history! Verse 22 ends the **second missionary journey** and verse 23 begins the **third missionary journey**.

[Utlely]

(1) Paul traveled about 2,800 miles on this trip compared to about 1,400 on his first journey. [Constable]

(2) Luke highlighted **one major speech** in each of Paul's three missionary journeys. During the first journey Paul preached to *Jews in Pisidian Antioch*, during the second journey he preached to *Gentiles in Athens*, and during the third journey he preached to *Christians at Miletus*.

[Constable DTS]

ii) **strengthening all the disciples** Paul took the Great Commission of Matt. 28:19-20 seriously. His ministry involved both evangelism (cf. Matt. 28:19) and discipleship (cf. 15:36; Matt. 28:20). [Utley]

4) Verses 24-28 No HUMAN speaker is FREE of deficiencies

i) Apollos, whose full name would have been Apollonius, may have arrived in Ephesus after Paul had departed for Jerusalem. That is the impression Luke gave. In any case he was from Alexandria, the capital of Egypt. Furthermore he was a Christian Hellenistic Jew who had a thorough understanding of the Old Testament, a gift for communicating and defending the faith, and enthusiasm (cf. Rom. 12:11).

b) 24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

i) Who was this Jew named Apollos?

(1) Native of Alexandria

- (a) Origin - The capital of Egypt from 330 B.C., founded by Alexander the Great as an outstanding Greek cultural and academic center. The finest library in the ancient world with over 500,000 volumes attracted many scholars. The Mouseion (Museum) complimented the library as the center of worship for the Muses, goddesses of "music," dancing, and letters.
- (b) Jewish Significance - It became the most important center of Judaism outside of Jerusalem. Jewish rabbis gathered in Alexandria to produce the *Septuagint (LXX)*, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.
- (c) Greek Significance - Greek philosophers and mathematicians such as Euclid, Aristarchus, and Eratosthenes worked here. Octavian incorporated it into the Roman empire about 30 B.C. It quickly became second in importance to Rome. Its importance declined about 100 A.D.
- (d) Biblical Significance - The educated Jews of Alexandria contended with *Stephen* (Acts 6:9). *Apollos*, the great Christian orator, came from Alexandria (Acts 18:24), and Paul rode the ships of that port (Acts 27:6; Acts 28:11). Although the Christians suffered persecution there, they produced a school with such notables as Clement and Origen in

leadership. The school was noted for its *allegorical approach* to Scripture.

- (2) He was an “*eloquent man*” - [logios] - well educated and cultured; attractive and convincing in speech.
- (3) *Competent* in the Scriptures - [dynatos] - able and powerful; expert in interpreting and preaching the Scriptures.
- (4) Been *instructed* in the *way* of the Lord
 - (a) Instructed - [katechemenos] - the word we get catechism from; to teach in a systematic or detailed manner.
 - (b) Way - [hodos] - a customary manner or way of life.
 - (i) "The way of the Lord" is another description of the Christian faith (i.e., the gospel; cf. 9:2; 16:17; 18:26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). Apollos was proclaiming what he knew of the gospel in the Ephesian synagogue, but he did not know about Christian baptism. He only knew about John the Baptist's baptism that expressed repentance for sins (cf. 19:3).
- (5) *Fervent in spirit* - an idiom that literally means “to boil in the spirit”
 - (a) Fervent [zeo] - enthusiasm
 - (b) spirit [pnuema] - spirit
- (6) He knew only the *baptism of John*
 - (a) This phrase about Apollos may have been the literary technique that Luke used to introduce the followers of John in 19:1-7. There were several heresies that developed in first century Palestine connected with John the Baptist's teaching and preaching. John was the last OT prophet who prepared for the coming of the Messiah (cf. Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3), but he was not the first gospel preacher. If Apollos' preaching focused too much on John, then he missed the full significance of Jesus. Both John and Jesus emphasized "repentance," "faith," and "godly living." Both initially called the Jews to a new commitment to faith and practice (covenant faithfulness and personal faith in YHWH). However, Jesus' message developed into the bold assertion of His central place (e.g., John 10 and 14), possibly this is what Apollos lacked. [Utley]
 - (b) **Matthew 3:11-12** - 11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”
 - (c) This situation with Apollos prepares the reader for chapter 19, also.

5) **Verses 26 Great TEACHERS are TEACHABLE**

a) **26 He began to speak 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.**

- i) **speak boldly** [parresiazomai] - speak freely, openly, fearlessly, having the courage to do so.
- ii) **more accurately** [akribos] - strict conformity to a norm or standard.

(1) Notice that this married couple took him privately and helped him to understand more fully the gospel of Christ; there was no public scolding, only Christian charity...but also know that Apollos had to be willing to receive it.

6) **Verses 27-28 Great teachers are ENDORSED and SHARED with others**

a) **27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, 28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.**

- (1) Of the after career of Apollos we know next to nothing. We see him for a moment, like a blazing comet in the ecclesiastical heavens, striking down opposition and unbelief with the onslaught of his fervid and logical eloquence; we see the reflex of his great influence at Corinth, in the repeated mention of him in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4-6; 4:5), written from Ephesus; but the only evidence we have of his continuance in the work which he so brilliantly began, is to be found in St. Paul's brief order to Titus, "Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them" (Titus 3:13).
- (2) What book in the Bible do many people believe may have been written by Apollos?

7) **Closing Thoughts**

- a) Believers need to correspond and strengthen each other
- b) No human speaker is free of deficiencies
- c) Great teachers are teachable
- d) Great teachers are endorsed by others and shared with others