

WORKMEN TOGETHER WITH GOD

BIBLE TEXT : Acts 18:24-28; I Corinthians 1:11, 12; 3:4-9

LESSON 337 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:5).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Acts 18:24-28

²⁴ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

²⁵ This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

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.

²⁷ 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:

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

1 Corinthians 1:11-12

¹¹ For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

¹² Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:4-9

⁴ For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

⁵ Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered;

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Apollos Introduced

During the time that the Apostle Paul was in Jerusalem, the church at Ephesus had a visit from Apollos, a minister from Alexandria, Egypt. He had not been a disciple of Jesus, and his preaching at first was not like that of Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and the other Christians who had been preaching at Ephesus. Apollos was a Jew, and knew the Scriptures well; but he did not preach like the Pharisees, or Judaizers, who insisted on preaching the Law only. Apollos had heard of the preaching of John the Baptist, and had believed what he heard.

John had preached: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). In Apollos' studies he had learned that the Messiah was to come; and he had no doubt read from Isaiah's prophecy that John the Baptist would come as "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." So when Apollos heard of John's preaching, he believed it.

It may have been that Apollos was in Egypt during the ministry of Jesus, and had never learned that Jesus had come as the Messiah, and had been crucified, and then had risen again. News did not travel so fast in those days as it does now. And of course the Jews who were the enemies of Christ did not want that news to travel at all.

Apollos Taught More Perfectly

Aquila and Priscilla, who had been working with Paul, and who had remained at Ephesus, enjoyed the preaching of Apollos. He was "fervent in the spirit," and "spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord." He was preaching all he knew, and nothing contrary to what Paul had preached. But he did not know that the great event, which he said would soon happen, had already taken place. Jesus had already come and died, and had risen again.

Aquila and Priscilla took him to their home and began to tell him the "way of God more perfectly." They no doubt told him what Paul had preached, that Christ had died on the cross as an atonement for sin, and had risen again, proving His deity. Wherever Paul went he preached a risen Saviour who could break the power of sin, and who would save all who called upon Him in faith and repentance.

The Story Received

Although Apollos was a great preacher and had perhaps won the following of many people, he was glad to listen to the story Aquila and Priscilla told. They were only tent-makers, but he recognised that they had a living message, and he accepted it. It does not matter to a person with an honest heart as to who tells him about Jesus. A child who has been saved can tell the story with as much assurance as an adult. You remember the story of the captive maid who told Naaman the leper about the prophet in Israel. She was but a girl and captive, but she knew the power of the God of Israel, and was not afraid to tell about Him.

Apollos Travels

but God gave the increase.

⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are God's building.*

After a series of meetings in Ephesus, Apollos went to Greece to preach, and the Christian believers sent along a recommendation stating that Apollos was preaching the truth, just as they had learned it from Paul. And Paul had received that message from Heaven.

How good it was that Apollos used his wonderful gift of oratory for the glory of God! He knew the Scriptures, too, and therefore could persuade people that Jesus was indeed the Christ. The Spirit of God brought all his previous study to his mind, and revealed to him the fulfilment of the Word of God.

Controversy

Apollos preached at Corinth, another place where the Apostle Paul had preached. People believed his preaching and loved him for the truth he proclaimed. But trouble arose because some of the people preferred the Apostle Paul to Apollos, and the church was divided.

Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians church and told them that they were doing wrong. They should listen to the message about Jesus, and think about Him, rather than pay so much attention to the preacher.

Paul did not want to win favour to himself. Always he lifted up Jesus; and he was willing that he himself should be accursed, if only the Jews would be saved. He told the Corinthians: "I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: but I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present" (II Corinthians 10:1, 2). He spoke with "plainness of speech," as contrasted with Apollos' eloquence, but the power of God was upon him and God used his ministry in the salvation of souls.

There are no greater writings in the world than those of the Apostle Paul. God could use him because he humbled himself and gave God the glory for all that was done through his ministry.

Paul asked: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (I Corinthians 3:5). They were merely the mouthpieces for the Holy Ghost. They spoke the Word that God gave them to speak. And no man would have been saved through the preaching of either Paul or Apollos if the Spirit of God had not convicted of sin. "It is the spirit that quickneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63).

Saved Through the name of Jesus

"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The foundation of all Christian preaching is the deity of Christ. There would be no more power in that name than in the name of any other prophet or great preacher if Jesus were not divine. Paul said, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain" (I Corinthians 15:14). In other words, if Jesus were not the divine Son of God, there would be no use to preach Christianity. But Christ did rise from the dead in a glorified body, and the bodies of all true Christians who die in the faith will be brought back to life in like manner with a body "like unto his glorious body."

Paul told the Romans that Jesus was declared to be "the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). He proved His deity by laying down His life and then taking it up again -- something no earthly prophet, priest, or king has ever been able to do.

Paul, Apollos, and Peter (who was here called Cephas) preached these fundamental truths of the Gospel, and people enjoyed listening to each of them because of the different ways in which they presented these truths. All that they preached was for

the building up of the Church. They wanted to help people to be ready to meet Jesus, and they were not preaching to take any glory to themselves.

A Work for All

There is a place for every servant of God to fill, and there is no reason for one to be jealous of another. (In fact, if jealousy is present, that person has lost the Spirit of God.) All God's ministers are working for one cause. One plants the seed of the Gospel, and another comes along and with his sermons waters that seed. As time goes by, that spiritual planting may need some weeding. It may be that the sermon of another minister will show up the "weeds" in a person's life that need to be taken out. As long as the minister preaches all the Word of God, and lives it, without taking away anything or compromising any truth, he is the servant of the Lord and is to be listened to and his ministry accepted, regardless of who he is.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Apollos?
2. Where did Apollos come from?
3. How did he preach at Ephesus?
4. What did Aquila and Priscilla tell Apollos?
5. What was the disagreement at Corinth?
6. What did Paul say in his letter to the Corinthians concerning himself and the ministry of Apollos?
7. What was the theme of the preaching of Paul and Apollos?