

SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 18:24-28.

INTRODUCTION:

“Alexandria was a famous city and seaport of Egypt, twelve miles inland from the mouth of the Nile River. It had been named Alexandria in honor of Alexander the Great, who founded it in 332 B.C. A large part of the population of Alexandria was Jewish, and one of the leading Hebrew colleges was located there, as was one of the most famous libraries in all the world” (Gareth L. Rease, New Testament History Acts).



Apollos was an Alexandrian by birth. His name appears ten times in the New Testament. He is first mentioned in Acts 18:24. Apollos was not only an Alexandrian by birth, but he was also a Jew, an eloquent man, mighty in the Old Testament scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in spirit, and bold in speech.

When Apollos came to Ephesus, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus. Apollos knew Isaiah 40:3-5; that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3-5 (Matthew 3:1-3); and what John the Baptist had taught about Jesus. But, that was all he knew about Jesus. Since he was only acquainted with the baptism of John, what he said about Jesus was accurate as far as it went, but he hadn't heard, as Paul Harvey might say, “the rest of the story.”

Aquila and Priscilla were Christians. Being Jews, they had been banished from Rome by Claudius. They were tentmakers by trade. They met and became well acquainted with Paul in Corinth. Eventually, they went with Paul to Ephesus. Paul soon went elsewhere while Aquila and Priscilla remained in Ephesus.

Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos speaking out boldly in the synagogue at Ephesus. Realizing that he needed “the rest of the story,” they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Apollos listened to Aquila and Priscilla, believed what they said, and responded to it. Since he was only acquainted with the baptism of John, he was certainly baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19:1-5.

In time, Apollos desired to preach in the Roman province of Achaia. Corinth was the capital of Achaia and the likely place Apollos wanted to go. The brethren in Ephesus encouraged him and wrote to the disciples in Achaia asking them to welcome Apollos.

Apollos went to Achaia and when he arrived, he greatly helped the believers in that region because he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

APPLICATIONS OF THE TEXT:

1. **We all have things we still need to learn.** Apollos was mighty in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. But, he still had things he needed to learn.
2. **If we love people, we will attempt to teach them what is lacking in their knowledge.**
 - A. Aquila and Priscilla loved Apollos. I know this because they explained to him the way of God more accurately.
 - B. Admittedly, we must use discretion in choosing when to teach, but failing to teach is not an option and we must never allow the question of when to become an excuse for inaction.
 - C. Anyone will help anyone. “Two simple Christian disciples at Ephesus could and did inform the mind of the cultured and eloquent Apollos so that, instructed by them, he would become a great power for truth and Christ in the whole neighborhood. It is within the power of the simplest and humblest to breathe those words of truth and grace which may make a man a fountain of blessing to his kind” (W. Clarkson, Pulpit Commentary).
3. **If we love the truth, we will listen with good and honest hearts when people love us enough to challenge our convictions.** Acts 17:10-11.

4. **How we teach is just as important as *what* we teach.**

- A. Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos *aside* and explained to him the way of God more accurately.
- B. How is not just about the best place. It's also about the best attitude. 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

5. **We need to understand and appreciate the factors of effective preaching.**

- A. The factors (in order of appearance in our text): eloquence (in speech or ideas – the Greek can mean either), deep knowledge, zeal, accuracy, boldness, support, and focus (“demonstrating by the Scriptures”).
- B. All these traits are important, but they are not equally important. Which are most important? “This was the secret of his (Apollos’, tdn) power and ability. He knew the Scriptures. Modern education manifests a sad and even tragic lack of learning in ... the Scriptures. The weakest spot in modern training falls at this very point where Apollos was ‘mighty.’ Today, the power of preaching has been confused with the expedient externals of politeness, polish, personality, and position. But Apollos was an efficient preacher because he had an understanding of the Scriptures, purity of heart and motives, and ability to proclaim the message. Too often congregations select their teachers ... on the basis of manners, personality, or degrees from some university. These expedients should not be scorned or overlooked, but the essential thing is to select men ... who are wise in the Scriptures. Many a modern tentmaker in the congregation can and will serve much better as a teacher of the Word than the so-called well-educated person who knows science by has never met nor surrendered to the Savior” (Dale quoted by Rease, New Testament History Acts).

C. **Supporting preachers.** There are at least four types of support men need to effectively preach.

1) **Feedback.**

- a. Preachers need *everyone's* feedback.
- b. Ladies, we especially need your respectful feedback. Men, we need to listen when ladies give us feedback. “Now we must pay a moment's attention to the fact that Priscilla's name is given first at this place (in the better manuscripts). The very least that this means is that Priscilla took part with her husband in giving these instructions to Apollos. It speaks something to us about her understanding of the Scripture, that she is able to help this preacher who was ‘mighty in the Scriptures’ to understand them better than had done before. Her sharing in the teaching of Apollos also throws some light on the prohibitions against a woman's teaching recorded in 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34. The activities of this woman make it difficult to take those prohibitions as meaning that a woman may never teach a man. ‘It should be observed that Priscilla took part with her husband in giving more perfect instruction to Apollos, and this illustrates the manner in which certain faithful women were eminent helpers of the apostles and evangelists in the spreading of the gospel. This should not, however, and cannot, without a deceitful handling of the Scriptures, be urged as proof that even the most eminent of the female helpers took part in public teaching’” (Rease then McGarvery, New Testament History Acts).

2) **Encouragement.**

3) **Provision.** Titus 3:13.

4) **Patience.**

- a. It's unlikely that Apollos was always eloquent, etc. Preachers need time to develop and realize their potential, opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them, etc.
- b. Their own unique potential. Paul was good at planting. Apollos was a good at watering. 1 Corinthians 3:6. “It is certain that Paul could do what Apollos would never have accomplished; it is equally certain that Apollos could effect some things which were not within the compass of the apostle. Like faithful Christian men, they rejoiced in one another. Instead of underestimating and disparaging one another because they differed in gifts and methods, they valued one another's special work and heartily co-operated in the mission field. Few things are more unworthy and discreditable than petty jealousies and disputations between Christians workmen of different types of excellence; few things are more admirable than the hearty appreciation by one man of the work rendered by another which is beyond his own powers of accomplishment” (W. Clarkson, Pulpit Commentary).