

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for October 9, 2016

The Ministry of Apollos
Acts 18:23-28

Acts 18:23-21:16 details Paul's third missionary journey, which will be centered on the city of Ephesus.

1. The care by Paul of the churches (18:23)

Paul's third missionary journey began with the same goal as the second missionary journey, to visit churches that he had planted in Galatia (15:36).

2. The conversion of Apollos in Ephesus (18:24-26)

The story of Apollos is the first of two episodes (cf. 19:1-7) that involve ministry to people who only knew of the ministry John the Baptist.

Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great and became the capital of Egypt. At this time it was the second largest city in the Roman Empire and enjoyed a sizable Jewish population.

Apollos had an ability to speak well prior to his conversion. This gift of God would serve the church well later.

Apollos was able to teach accurately about the Messiah from the Old Testament but was unaware that Jesus had come to fulfill those prophecies. A person can be accurate in their teaching but incomplete in their full knowledge. Similar to the other disciples of John the Baptist (cf. Acts 19:1-7), Apollos was an Old Testament saint who received the Holy Spirit upon learning about Jesus Christ. This parallels the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8) and Cornelius (Acts 10).

There are many people today who have a partial understanding of Jesus who we can serve by teaching them the Bible. They may be involved in various types of churches.

3. The commission of Apollos to Corinth (18:27-28)

"Going across to Achaia" meant sailing the Aegean Sea to visit the Corinthian Church that Paul founded (18:1-18). This desire must have come from his relationship with Priscilla and Aquila who could tell him about the church in Corinth from their eighteen-month ministry with them (Acts 18:1-2, 18-19).

The participation of the brethren at Ephesus was important to confirm Apollos' ministry. The affirmation of the church is necessary since no one should determine his formal ministry unilaterally, not even Paul (cf. Acts 13:2-3).

Ephesian church took the initiative to communicate their support of Apollos (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:1). No church should receive people into ministry without sufficient confidence in their ability to serve the Lord well (1 Timothy 5:22).

The significance of Apollos' great help can be seen in 1 Corinthians 1:12 which places him alongside Paul and Peter. Note the reference to "grace" in description of the believers, for all ministry is the result of God's grace. This fits with Paul's words regarding Apollos' role in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth."

The ministry to believers is an essential part of church. This happens far beyond Sunday morning and does not occur without our active participation.

Apollos taught the Corinthians what he had learned from Priscilla and Aquila regarding Jesus as the Christ. This certainly included the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah.

We teach what we ourselves have learned. If we are not learning we cannot grow in our faith and what we tell others will become stale.

May we follow the example of Apollos by learning and sharing the truth of Jesus Christ.