

Series: Acts

Lesson #78

Title: Reasoning From God's Word

Scripture: Acts 18: 1-13

Date: July 30, 2009

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Princeton, New Jersey

Acts 18: 12: And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, 13: Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

What had Paul preached that made them say this? How had Paul preached that made them say this?

Acts 18: 4: And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5: And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*.

Last time we spent our time comparing this scripture with Paul's letters to Thessalonica. We saw that Paul was renewed in spirit when he heard of the power of God working in the brethren at Thessalonica. Do you remember Paul's manner of preaching at Thessalonica?

Acts 17: 2: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3: Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

So as Paul faced those in Corinth he was determined to do as he had done in Thessalonica.

Acts 18: 5: And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*.

Bear in mind that Corinth was made up of wise men and religious men, rich men and poor men, idolaters as well as those who knew the scriptures and met in the synagogue. But God had taught Paul by experience that the only thing he could do was to preach Christ according to the scriptures.

Acts 18: 9: Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11: And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

I Corinthians 1: 17: For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect....

Proposal: Let's take a few of the scriptures that Paul quotes in his letters and see what Luke means when he says, Paul reasoned with them out of the scriptures. When it says, He preached to them that Jesus was the Christ.

Romans 9: 31: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32: Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33: As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

I. PAUL SAID THAT CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THAT IT WAS WRITTEN OF OLD THAT MANY WOULD STUMBLE AT THIS.

First, take note that here in Romans 9: 33, Paul is reasoning from the Old Testament scriptures:

Psalm 118:22: The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

Isaiah 8: 13: Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread. 14: And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15: And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

Isaiah 28: 14: Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem. 15: Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: 16: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Secondly, see how Paul applied these scriptures as we read his use of them back in Romans 10:

Romans 10: 1: Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Paul told them that this Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth is Christ, the Messiah, the Stumblingstone and the Rock of offense, the sure Foundation, the Cornerstone. This one was sent by God to manifest the righteousness of God. The law bears witness to his righteousness--the prophets bear witness to his righteousness. This is Christ Jesus the Son of God whom God hath set forth to make satisfaction for the sins of his people. Your

zeal for the law is in ignorance. You can not attain to the righteousness of the law by your works. Submit yourselves to Christ through faith for he is the righteousness of God, the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

They responded:

This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

Paul's preaching was not contrary to the word of God it was contrary to how the vainly wise and religious men interpreted the word of God.

I Corinthians 1: 18: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

II. PAUL DECLARES THAT GOD'S WISDOM IS NOT MAN'S WISDOM

In his letter to the Corinthians in chapter 1 verse 31 Paul quotes scripture.

1 Corinthians 1: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord

Paul is quoting from:

Jeremiah 9:23: Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: 24: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

Hear how he preaches from this scripture:

I Corinthians 1: 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

III. PAUL DECLARES THAT TRUE WISDOM IT TAUGHT BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN THE HEART.

1 Corinthians 2:9: But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Paul is declaring the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 64:4: For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

Notice how Paul expounds this scripture:

I Corinthians 2: 4: And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 6: Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9: But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10: But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11: For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13: Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. 15: But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16: For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Here is why Paul was convinced to preach Christ according to the scriptures only?

I Corinthians 1: 4: I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5: That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge; 6: Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9: God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord

One thing that each of us is learning as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is that God's word is what we need, and only what we need.

We are always tempted by man's wisdom, by man's intellect, by the findings of history, and various forms of biblical historical research, but the truth is if we could take all of that out of the way and have only God's word--if God is pleased to reveal the truth in us--we would find this word is all we need.

Let's take God at his word.

When God says in the Old Testament that Jonah was swallowed by a big fish and vomited out on the shores of Nineveh and then in the New Testament we find that Christ Jesus says:

Matthew 12:40: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Then let's spend our time comparing scripture with scripture so as to see the faithfulness of Christ who was obedient unto the death of the cross--

1. As Jonah was:

Jonah 2: 5: The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

So shall the Son of man be:

Isaiah 53: 10:...thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied:...12: Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death:

2. As Jonah was:

Jonah 2: 3: For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

So shall the Son of man be:

Isaiah 53:10: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief

Psalms 22: 1: 'MY GOD, MY GOD WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?'

3. As Jonah was:

Jonah 2: 1: Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God...2: I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD...7: When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

Jonah 2: 2:...thou heardest my voice....6:...yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.

So shall the Son of man be:

Psalm 16: 9: Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. 10: For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Luke 23:46: And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

4. As Jonah was:

Jonah 2: 10: And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

So shall the Son of man be:

Matthew 28: 2: And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Psalm 110: 1: The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

There are so many other examples like this. But the point is, let us hear the word of our Lord rather than spending time reading books about: whether it is biologically possible for a man to survive in a fish, whether the tidal waves or tsunamis made the Red Sea to part, the old testament as merely history, the laws of the old covenant as merely moral codes...lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Paul was a wise man. But Paul refused to tickle the intellect of wise men. He preferred to be viewed as a base fellow, as a babler, a seed-picker, and preach Christ than to be accepted by the wise men of this world and make the cross of Christ of no effect.

Those who made insurrection against Paul would have surely claimed to believe the word of Jehovah, just not the way Paul preached it. We see it in our day.

Most will preempt their hearts true boast, with a great testimony of how they believe that salvation is all of grace. But then proceed to speak in terms that sound so deep and so wise--of history, of the prophets who have gone before, of the philosophies of men and countless other speculations--

AND God says it is for the sake of turning things upside down:

Isaiah 29: 15: Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? 16: Surely your turning of things

upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding

Do we have a heart that is teachable or is our heart too proud to admit we know nothing as we ought?

The proud, stout heart has this spirit:

John 9:34:...Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?

Acts 17:18: What will this babbler say?

Acts 18:13: This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

But a broken and a contrite heart says:

Luke 11:1: Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Psalm 25:4: Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. 5: Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Psalm 18: 26: With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward. 27: For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks. 28: For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

Listen to the words of the Everlasting Father, King Jesus, the Wise Man and this will be our application.

Proverbs 2: 1: My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2: So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; 3: Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4: If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; 5: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 6: For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. 7: He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8: He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 9: Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; *yea*, every good path.