

Series: Acts

Lesson #82

Title: Grace and Knowledge of Jesus Christ

Scripture: Acts 18: 24-28

Date: September 3, 2009

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Princeton, New Jersey

**Acts 18: 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.**

### APOLLOS THE BELIEVER

Remember, what the LORD declared through Isaiah (the message we heard Isaiah preach in Isaiah 19?) The LORD promised he would save his elect in Egypt.

Here is one of those "certain", chosen, everlastingly loved children, whom God put in Christ before the world began. In this case, he was of Jewish descent but that is not why he is a child of God or why he is a true Jew. Apollos was a child of God by the choice of God, not according to any merit or works in Apollos but according to God's grace, through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 2: 28: For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

Apollos stands here as testimony of God's faithfulness concerning his promise to call out each of his elect, whether they be in the nation Israel, in Egypt, in Assyria, or Ethiopia or the uttermost parts of the earth.

(V25) *This man was instructed in the way of the Lord*--This language tells us that Apollos was preaching with the same eye toward Christ that John the Baptist taught prior to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. John was sent to prepare the way of the Lord. He was a forerunner.

Illustration: A forerunner went throughout the country before a king, blowing the trumpet to announce the arrival of the king. John the Baptist was the forerunner sent to announce the arrival of King Jesus.

Isaiah 40:3: 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. 4: Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 5: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

John 1: 23: He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

John preached that Christ is eternal, worthy of more honor than any other.

John 1: 15: John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

John preached that Christ is the Lamb of God.

John 1: 29: The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John bear witness that the Spirit of God descended and abode on Jesus signifying to Israel this is the Christ.

John 1: 30: This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31: And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32: And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33: And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

John declared that Jesus is the Son of God.

John 1: 34: And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. 35: Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36: And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

John preached the gospel of repentance from dead works and faith in Christ. John preached that the Lord whom ye have sought, the Messiah whom you have expected, is coming and will quickly appear. Prepare to meet the King, repent from your former ways, your sins and your self-righteousnesses and receive Christ by faith.

Apollos spake and taught DILIGENTLY--accurately--these things of the Lord. But Apollos did not know that the gospel which John spoke of Christ, as being the one who would baptize with the Holy Ghost, had actually come to pass since John's ministry. *Knowing only the baptism of John--he knew Christ only as far as the ministry of John went.*

**Acts 18: 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.**

AQUILA AND PRISCILLA RECOGNIZED THAT APOLLOS HAD NOT HEARD OF WHAT CHRIST HAD DONE AND IS DOING SINCE GOING TO THE CROSS.

By sending forth the Holy Spirit, by baptizing his church in the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, God the Father bore witness that the Lord Jesus Christ is both Lord and Christ, the fulfillment of righteousness having fulfilled that which was written in the law and in the prophets concerning him. (Acts 2: 14-21.)

Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God. By his life, death and resurrection he has overcome the world. He has bought the church with his own blood. Jesus Christ the Son of God has purged the sin of every individual elect child of God. John preached the kingdom was at hand, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Christ Jesus signified his kingdom is established by baptizing the church in the Holy Ghost. All power in heaven and earth has been given to the Son. Jesus of Nazareth is both Lord and Christ over all--he is the King-Christ, the King-Priest, the King-Savior.

Acts 2: 36: Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

It means that Jesus Christ the Son of God is the Head of the Church. Christ filleth all in all (Eph 1: 17-23.) As soon as Peter declared that this Jesus of Nazareth is both Lord and Christ, what did Christ do?

Acts 2: 37: Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart

**Understand this:**

1. Christ is alive. He possess all power to send forth his grace and effectually, irresistibly reign in the hearts of his people through the Holy Spirit, instructing them in knowledge of him through the gospel. He brings us into the obedience of faith. Paul says in another place:

2 Peter 3: 17: Do not be moved from your own steadfastness. 18: But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Grace and knowledge is OF Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 1: 23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

We can not have one without the other. Jesus grows us in grace--in power--as he increases our knowledge--wisdom--that he is both our Lord and Savior, our Power and our Wisdom. And as he increases our knowledge of him he grows us in grace.

**Proposition:** This is what Apollos was taught and what Apollos was experiencing. As Apollos was taught the way of Christ more perfectly, we see in this whole passage the evidence that Christ is indeed both Lord and Christ. We see it in the way Apollos was grown in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and how he became of use afterwards.

Notice this, as you read in the book of Acts what happened when Paul came to--Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth—go to the letters that Paul wrote to those various churches. We see that the things which Paul writes are those things which Paul witnessed Christ effectually work in the churches through the gospel.

The account in our text happened at Ephesus. Paul was not there at the time, but Paul was inspired to write his letters by the Spirit of Christ. So turn to Ephesians 4 again and compare this to what happened at Ephesus with Apollos.

**Ephesians 4: 7: But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**

The gift of grace which Apollos had when he came to Ephesus was given to him by Christ, but the knowledge of Christ was at this time given by Christ to Apollos in a limited measure. But Christ brought Apollos to Ephesus and he brought Aquilla and Priscilla to Ephesus because he would give Apollos more grace. He was doing this with Apollos for a reason.

**Ephesians 4: 11: And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:**

Apollos will be Christ's gift to the church at Corinth. But in the process of equipping Apollos, he first has to be grown by the effectual grace of Christ so that Apollos has the knowledge, by experience, that Christ is the one who effectually works obedience in his people--else Apollos would go forth trying to effect obedience in the people by his own power rather than simply preach Christ and wait on the power and wisdom of Christ to do so.

How did the Lord Jesus Christ work this in Apollos?

**Ephesians 4: 15: But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:**

First, from Christ the Head, Christ effectually worked in Aquilla and Priscilla this grace and knowledge of Christ so that they spoke the truth in love to Apollos.

**Acts 18: 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.**

They expounded unto him the Way of God, Christ the Way. They spoke the Truth in love, Christ the Truth. They did so in love because they were constrained by the love of Christ which made them confident that Christ was able to work obedience in the heart of Apollos. They spoke Christ the Truth because they wanted Apollos to grow up into Christ in all things, in the power of God, and not for his faith to stand in the wisdom of men.

We are not speaking in love if we do not speak Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life. We can not expect someone to grow up into Christ in all things if we are not instructing, correcting or disciplining them in the truth of Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life. **They expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.** They spoke Christ the Truth in love, that Apollos might grow up into Christ the Head of the body, in all things.

**Ephesians 4: 16: From whom the whole body fitly joined together**

In this passage at Ephesus we get a glimpse of this in these three. Christ the Head, fitly joined Aquilla, Priscilla and Apollos together. What a word of grace in our text!

**Acts 18: 19: And [Paul] came to Ephesus, and left [Aquila and Priscilla] there:...24: And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.**

Christ fitly joined them together at Ephesus.

**Ephesians 4: 16: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,**

*Christ compacted them together*--the word "compacted" means to make of one mind. Christ the Head did this by that which these two joints--Aquila and Priscilla--supplied to Apollos. That is, the truth of Christ which they had been given from Christ the Head is what they gave to Apollos and through the Holy Spirit Apollos was compacted together with them of one mind.

**Ephesians 4: 16: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,**

All was done by the grace of Christ according to the effectual working of Christ in the measure, that is, in the member, of every part of his body--in Priscilla, in Aquilla, in Apollos--*unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

Proof that this was the grace of Christ effectually working in them is all through our text: Apollos was an *eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures*--cultured, well-educated, well-spoken, he knew the Old Testament scriptures mightily. *This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently [accurately] the things of the Lord.* He spoke *boldly in the synagogue.* Aquilla and Priscilla were tent-makers. Priscilla was a woman, who appears to have done most of the teaching. What made Aquilla and Priscilla care enough to speak to one so fervent and bold as Apollos? What made Apollos receive this instruction? Christ the Head, from heavens glory, worked grace effectually in the heart of everyone involved, that Apollos might grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. By the power his grace, they all desired to hear the truth of Christ expounded more perfectly.

**Ephesians 4: 16:...By this, Christ, maketh increase of the body...**

By this, Christ increased the body--Aquilla, Priscilla, and Apollos, with the church at Ephesus and the church at Corinth, the body was increased by this.

**Acts 18: 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:**

When Christ works this grace effectually in us, when we: 2 Peter 3: 18:...grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. [We say] To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

This is what Paul meant when he told the Philippians they were:

Philippians 1:11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

But listen to how the Spirit effectually moved Paul to describe this work:

**Ephesians 4: 16: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.**

How is it that the Spirit would say that this work--which is all of Christ's grace and all by the knowledge of him--be described as the body "edifying itself in love?" It was all done by Christ! How can it be said that the body is edifying itself in love?

Because verse 15 says Christ is the Head of the whole body. Each believer is a member, one with him and with each other. The power and wisdom of our Head makes every member edifying to the whole body. Aquilla and Priscilla actually taught Apollos. Apollos actually received. The church actually recommended him to Corinth. All because Christ the Head worked this in his body, and his grace and power made them edify the body in love.

Question? Once Apollos had experienced this effectual working of Christ's grace, once Apollos had been increased in this knowledge of Christ Jesus, what methods then did Apollos employ when he reached the church at Corinth?

**Acts 18: 28: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.**

Wherever Christ has begun his work in this manner, he brings about obedience so that his saints look to no other weapon but the gospel of Christ and him crucified, for he is our Power and our Wisdom, all grace and all knowledge is of him. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen!