

In search of...

Truth & Right

Volume 10 Issue 10

March 8, 2015

Apollos

Apollos is not one of the major characters of the New Testament. What we are told about his work is recorded in six verses in Acts 18:24- 19:1. Paul does mention his name five times in First Corinthians, because he was one of the ones, along with Paul and Cephas, whose names some brethren had attached to certain factions in the church at Corinth. Moreover, Paul also mentions him in Titus 3:13 where Paul admonishes Titus to assist "Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey." Yet, what we know about Apollos himself we learn from those few verses in Acts already mentioned.

Apollos had a great knowledge of the scriptures. Luke introduces us to him in the following fashion: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus" (Acts 18:24). He was not an inspired man, at least when we first meet him, yet he was "mighty in the scriptures." Knowledge in any field comes only at great cost, but such is also true concerning knowledge in the word of God (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15). Many people would like to have greater knowledge of the Bible. They can have it, but they will have to pay the price. Apollos had paid the price.

Nevertheless, though Apollos had a great knowledge of the scriptures, his knowledge was incomplete and insufficient, indicating the fact that he was still wrong: "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**" (Acts 18:25, emp. SW). If he preached on the wonders of God's creation, the Ten Commandments, loving one's neighbor or living a good moral life, he would preach the truth. He was mighty in the Old Testament scriptures, but the New Testament scriptures had not yet been written. In fact, he even had knowledge about Jesus, and his preaching about Jesus was accurate: "...he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus" (Acts 18:25 ASV). However, what would happen if he preached on baptism? I believe we can ascertain the answer to this by studying Acts 19:1-5. Thus, one might know a great deal about the scriptures, and yet not know the very things he needs to know to tell people how to be saved. We hear it said sometimes concerning a preacher of error, "He preaches from the Bible." Yes, but so did Apollos. Billy Graham, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell all know a

great deal about the Bible. Nevertheless, they have not learned the truth on the church, on baptism or on worship. Many today preach accurately about God, Christ, divine love, mercy, grace, faith, and such like, but when it comes to the plan of salvation, the church, scriptural worship and such like, they are wrong.

Apollos was a very zealous man: "...being fer-vent in the spirit" (Acts 18:25). McCord's translation says, "...zealous in spirit." The term is from the Greek *zeo*, which means literally "to boil." Paul uses a form of this word in Galatians 1:14: "And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly **zealous** of the tradi-tions of my fathers" (emp. SW). The Bible teaches us to be fervent in spirit or zealous (Rom. 12:11; Titus 2:14; Rev. 3:19). Although he was passionately zeal-ous, it does not change the fact that he was still wrong. There was nothing wrong with his zeal, but the error lied with his knowledge (cf. Rom. 10:1-2). As that of many religious people today, his zeal was commend-able, but unless he was instructed properly, he would continue to lead people into error.

Apollos was sincere; he was no hypocrite. Genu-ine sincerity is an admirable trait. No doubt, there are many religious pretenders. Repeatedly in Matthew 23:13-33, Jesus scathingly rebuked certain ones for their hypocrisy. Yet, sincerity and good intentions will not suffice. If they would, then Aquila and Priscilla wasted their time. How do I know Apollos was sincere and had good intentions? I know by the fact that he changed when he learned that he was wrong. One who is sincere will change when he learns he is wrong. We could say the same thing about some of the converts in Acts 19:1-6. Will God ignore the requirements of the gospel just because one is sincere (Matt. 7:21-23)?

The preaching and practice of Apollos was right at one time. Concerning the baptism of John, Jesus insinuated that it was from heaven (Matt. 21:23-27). In fact, those who refused the baptism of John "rejected the counsel of

God against themselves" (Luke 7:30). However, at the time of which we read in Acts 18, it was no longer valid. It had served its purpose and the baptism of the Great Commission had superseded it. This reinforces a valuable lesson for us—some things that were once right under the old covenant are not right anymore in the new covenant: animal sacrifices, mechanical instruments of music in worship, miracles, speaking in tongues and such like. The fact a thing was right at one time does not mean it is right now. Moral law does not change; religious law has changed.

Apollos was not content to be wrong on any point. He was right with reference to the subjects of God, the scriptures and Jesus Christ, but he was wrong on baptism. Of course, none of us will ever have perfect knowledge, and none of us will ever live perfect lives, but God expects us to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5:6). No person can have divine approval while he willingly engages in religious error or in immorality (Gal. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). Jesus pro-claimed, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Conversely, many people in our time are perfectly content to be wrong on certain matters. They validate such by stating, "Just so long as we are right on the major things." How does one determine what is major and what is minor? Was Apollos right on the major things? He sure was, but when taught properly, he changed accordingly. All man-made churches believe and teach the truth on many subjects. Some of them teach the truth on most subjects, like Apollos, but we should try to teach and obey the truth on all subjects.

Apollos knew that one way is not as good as an-other is. Luke certainly portrays him as "an eloquent man" and was "instructed in the way of the Lord" (Acts 18:24-25). The Greek lexicographer J. H. Thayer says that the Greek word for "eloquent" means "learned, a man of letters, skilled in literature and the arts; es-pecially versed in history and antiquities." He says it also indicates that he was "skilled in speech." Yet, he did not know the truth he needed to know about baptism. Please note that Aquila

and Priscilla were not being arrogant in pointing out his error. They did not insist he do things their way. They "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). As a result, he did not insist that one way is as good as another is. Apollos knew better than to argue that one baptism is as good as another is. Have we learned the same lesson? What about one church being as good as another is (Matt. 16:18; 15:13)? What about one way of worship being as good as another is (Matt. 15:8-9; John 4:24)? What about one faith being as good as another is (Eph. 4:4-6)?

Apollos believed that those in error should change. We may know this because he changed when he learned that he was in error. Note that he did not change his attitude toward God or the scriptures, neither did he change his zeal or his eloquence; these did not need changing. Rather, he changed what he taught and practiced with reference to baptism. He did not argue that it makes no difference. He did not rationalize, "Baptism is valid just so long as the person being baptized knows he is doing so to obey God." He did not argue that since he had been sincerely teaching what he had been teaching, that it would be all right to continue teaching the same thing. He did not say he had led too many people to be baptized with John's baptism to change now. Think about this question: "What if, when he was shown the way of God more perfectly, he had continued to teach the same thing he had been teaching?" A person may be in error and be honest. However, he cannot be honest and continue in error after he learns the truth.

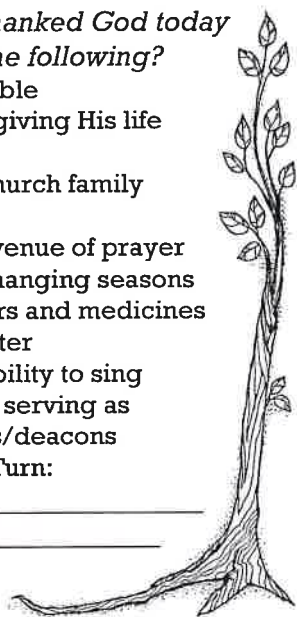
In conclusion, although Apollos learned the truth and made the necessary changes, there were still those in error that he had taught. At least Paul later taught some of them the truth and they obeyed the gospel (Acts 19:1-6). We hope any others he had taught error also later learned the truth. We can see the continued faithfulness of Apollos in the mention made of him in the verses cited by the introduction. Let us all seek to imitate his admirable qualities.

Sam Willcut

God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say **THANK YOU?**

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Jobs
- The avenue of prayer
- The changing seasons
- Doctors and medicines
- Laughter
- The ability to sing
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:



This bulletin is published by the
WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST

92 Rose Cottage Lane
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422

<http://www.truthandright.org>



Like us on
FACEBOOK under
Wellsburg church
of Christ!

Follow us on **TWITTER**
@wellsburgchurch



View us on **YOUTUBE**:
[https://www.youtube.com/
user/wellsburgchurch](https://www.youtube.com/user/wellsburgchurch)

Subject to Authority

W Y H Q W Y J S M C N C A W K N E E N W
M J W X B P W I X R A A R E V I L E D I
J Z F L S U P R E M E M Z T O W A V V E
V K O B I P N Y S A M E J B T C F D B M
K S X Z L O G O J U S H H E N G C O Z J
P Y R Q E M J Z Q L N L V A V F D B X W
H H T N N J C R E S P E C T L J C S D O
Y X X F C V T J Y O Q M J E Z T O D V X
H E A L E D Q R F F V P N N Q H S N R U
K W Y A N Q L O V P J I L L E A H N W U
Z F S A F R E E D O M O Q N X V E P L D
Q T M S K H D Z N D S F H K K Q P J E H
U J B Z Z W E K W X U T O H G R H F Z J
X W N S T C V K A E F V O Y W P E N X A
I Q I M S D E H H N V G H E C U R Z C Y
M K Z I M E R P S D O X K L Z N D X L U
U X H I Y X Y W W U F G A Y M I D L U Q
R S R M G U O V V R T S E G Y S E H R F
R U J A N C N J D E B P Y Q P H C D F H
N Q M S F F E N O S U F F E R E D P O R
J Z U Z R H B Z I B Q Y F T O I E I R L

DIRECTIONS: Look up the scripture in the Bible, and find the answer in the crossword above.

- 1 Pet. 2:13, ...whether it be to the emperor as _____,
- 1 Pet. 2:14, ...or to governors sent by him to _____ those who do evil...
- 1 Pet. 2:15, ...that by doing good you should put to _____ the ignorance...
- 1 Pet. 2:16, ...not using your _____ as a cover-up for evil, but...
- 1 Pet. 2:17, Honor _____, Love the brotherhood. Fear God.
- 1 Pet. 2:18, ...be subject to your masters with all _____...
- 1 Pet. 2:19, ...when, mindful of God, one _____ sorrows
- 1 Pet. 2:20, what credit is it if, when you sin and are _____ for it...
- 1 Pet. 2:21, ...because Christ also _____ for you,
- 1 Pet. 2:23, When He was _____, He did not revile in return;
- 1 Pet. 2:24, ...By His wounds you have been _____.
- 1 Pet. 2:25, ...but have now returned to the _____ and Overseer of your souls.