

WORKMEN TOGETHER WITH GOD

BIBLE TEXT: Acts 18:24-28; I Corinthians 1:11, 12; 3:4-9

LESSON 337 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "He that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Corinthians 3:8, 9)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Acts 18:24-28

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.

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.

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:

²⁸ For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:11-12

¹¹ For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

¹² Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:4-9

⁴ For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

⁵ Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Godly Attributes of Apollos, an Early Missionary

1. Apollos was instructed in the Scriptures, Acts 18:24, 25;

Colossians 1:10

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

2 Timothy 2:15

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2. He was an eloquent man, using his gifts for the glory of God, Acts 18:24, 25;

Ephesians 4:8

⁸ Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Ephesians 4:11-13

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:

¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Romans 12:5-8

⁵ So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

⁷ Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

⁸ Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

3. Being humble in heart, he was willing to receive instruction, Acts 18:26;

Romans 12:10

¹⁰ *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Romans 12:16

¹⁶ *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

James 3:13-17

¹³ Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

¹⁴ But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

¹⁵ This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

¹⁶ For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

4. He was fervent in the Spirit, and spoke and taught diligently and boldly, Acts 18:25, 26;

Ecclesiastes 9:10

¹⁰ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might;

⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Romans 12:11

¹¹ Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Galatians 4:18

¹⁸ But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in a good *thing*, and not only when I am present with you.

Isaiah 62:1

¹ For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp *that* burneth.

2 Corinthians 9:2

² For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

5. His ministry was blessed by God, and undoubtedly many believed through him, Acts 18:27, 28; I Corinthians 3:5.
6. Paul used Apollos and Peter as examples, with himself, to teach the danger of contentions over spiritual leaders and to show the tendency of some unwisely to adore their leaders, I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:4-9,

1 Corinthians 3:21-23

²¹ Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;

²² Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

²³ And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

1 Corinthians 4:6

⁶ And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

NOTES:

Apollos was a man whose ministry was richly blessed of God. He was a worker together with Paul and the other Apostles who were labouring to make the way of salvation known in Asia and in Europe and in all the known world. By observing the character and qualifications of this man of God, who was highly commended by the Apostles, we can be helped to make our lives count more effectively in God's service.

Instructed in the Scriptures

Apollos was a Jew and no doubt had a certain knowledge of the Holy Scriptures because of the training that was given every person born into an orthodox Jewish home. Such a young person would commit to memory many of Moses' sayings, as well as whole Psalms. God was honoured by the family in the multitude of prayers that were uttered at a seemingly long list of occasions in their daily life. The feasts were observed and the paschal lamb eaten.

Parents of today would do well to follow that example and diligently instruct their children in the Word and in the will of God. It is because this teaching is so lamentably lacking that juvenile delinquency prevails.

Apollos had been taught the "way of the Lord." Perhaps it was through his ardent love for the Scriptures, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that he was led to a knowledge of the Son of God. No qualification is more essential than that the one who aspires to be a worker in God's service should have the Word wrought out in his life and be well instructed in the way of the Lord. He must be strong in the things of the Lord, and he acquires that strength by feasting on the strong meat of the Word. As he yields himself to God, he is fitted by the Spirit of God and by the truth of the Word

of God to do the work He gives him to do. Then, and then only, does he become a workman who "needeth not to be ashamed." The knowledge of the Word of God certainly contributed to Apollos' eloquence in telling others of Christ and His saving grace.

Humility

"Knowing only the baptism of John," Apollos needed to be instructed in the greater teachings of Jesus. Through the persecution of the Jews in Rome, two devout followers of the Lord Jesus Christ were driven from Rome (**Acts 18:1-2** ¹ After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; ² And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them). They, like Paul, were tentmakers. Because Paul was of "the same craft," he lived with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth. They had a marvellous teacher in Paul and undoubtedly were well instructed in the Gospel. When Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos speak in the synagogue at Ephesus they "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). His attitude must have been commendable, for when he went to Corinth the brethren at Ephesus gave him their spiritual backing and a recommendation to the brethren in Greece (Acts 18:27).

Many people are not willing to be instructed. They feel that they are sufficient in themselves and need to pay no attention to the help, which God can give through another one of His servants. But Apollos accepted that help, and that is why God could use him as a soul winner.

Fervency and Diligence

Like his fellow labourer, Paul, Apollos was fervent in spirit — in the Spirit — and we are told that he spoke and taught diligently. This is a happy combination of qualifications that, beyond all doubt, contributed much to his success. We often see those who are zealous, but who skip over detailed and painstaking work — details that are part of the Holy Spirit's work in the salvation of souls. They therefore fail to see the results that should follow their zeal. To be fervent and still diligent is something we should all strive for. We should have the fire of enthusiasm in all that we do, and yet we should be willing to follow each endeavour through to its culmination, even though such a determination exacts from us a kind of labour and sacrifice that is not particularly to our liking.

He "taught diligently the things of the Lord." He was interested in making it known that Jesus died and rose again; that He was truly the Son of God, not merely "a son of God," as a modernistic translation of the Bible states. Unless He was the Son of God, His birth, His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and His teachings were all in vain. Only God Incarnate could pardon and take away sin from the human heart.

Courage

Apollos had a boldness that was truly excellent. He did not hesitate to go into the very strongholds of Judaism and preach the doctrine of Christ. After he had been instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, he told the Jews that Christ had come as the Saviour of the world and that He was their Messiah. He boldly expounded the Scriptures and convinced many of the Truth. He was not backward about speaking the name of the One he had come to love so much. Because of that fact, many more people heard the sacred message than would have heard it had he been less bold for God.

Unity

At a later time, during Paul's third missionary journey, Paul wrote the brethren at Corinth a letter, which has been preserved

for us by the Holy Spirit. It must be remembered, in studying this first epistle to the Corinthians, that the instructions were written to correct certain wrong practices that were being allowed in the church there. Some of the things he condemned were actual sins — sins that were being committed by those who had once been saved and who had been members of the body of believers, and who were still trying to continue as members even though they had lost their salvation because of the sins they wilfully committed. These ungodly persons were causing confusion in the congregation.

Other things Paul wrote about were not actually sins of transgression but were practices or tendencies that would lead to sin, or to the exaltation of the flesh, or to confusion that would take the attention of the people from God. Paul wrote also of the carnality that existed in the hearts of some that must needs be purged out by the Blood of Christ, and of the danger that even one of these things would be to those who were yet innocent of them.

Paul saw the tendency on the part of some to prefer certain of their leaders and to undervalue others. Some said, "I am of Paul"; and others said, "I am of Apollos," or, "I of Cephas"; and still others would say, "I of Christ." Paul in his day saw the grave danger of such attitudes. In the first place, he reasoned, such attitudes were purely carnal. Contentions and strife were always the result. To Paul, this meant that the body of believers was divided, and that God's Spirit was hindered in His work among them.

There are those today who want certain preachers to preach to them, certain ones to pray for them for healing, certain ones to pray for them for salvation, certain ones to counsel with them. If Paul and Apollos were here they would call such people "carnal." Paul wrote: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptised in the name of Paul?" (I Corinthians 1:13). "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. . . . For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Corinthians 3:4-6, 9).

We know that the ministers whom God has placed over the congregations are to be received "in the Lord with all gladness," held "in reputation" (Philippians 2:29), esteemed "very highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thessalonians 5:13), "counted worthy of double honour" (I Timothy 5:17); and obedience and submission are to be given them as to those who "watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Hebrews 13:17). But the people of God are not to classify these men of God in such a manner as to cause division and strife in the body of believers. Neither are the members of the church to receive the minister's message as from the individual, but rather are to receive the Word of God as a message from God.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the nationality of Apollos? Where was he born?
2. What special gift was bestowed upon this man of God — a gift that he used effectually for God's cause?
3. What is implied in the statement that Apollos was "instructed in the way of the Lord"?
4. Apollos was said to be "fervent in the spirit." What other great attribute did he have that complemented his zeal for God?
5. Who heard Apollos speak in Ephesus? What did these people do for him? What godly attitude did Apollos manifest when approached by these disciples?
6. Paul said of himself that he had planted and that he was a wise master-builder. What part did he give Apollos in each of these metaphorical expressions?
7. What is one of the things that cause division and strife among the body of believers?