

# Called to Explain

Acts 18:1-3, 18-21, 24-26; Rom 16:3-4  
SS Lesson for 02/21/2021

**Devotional Scripture:** Luke 24:13-27

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: Rom 16:3-4*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### EXPLAINING THROUGH FELLOWSHIP (ACTS 18:1-3)

##### *Fellowship during traveling (1-2)*

Traveling to lead others to salvation (Acts 8:26-29)

Traveling to help others understand (Acts 10:22)

Traveling in obedience to God's call (Heb 11:8)

Traveling to minister to others (Acts 9:15)

Traveling as directed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:9)

##### *Fellowship in the workplace (3)*

Fellowship in the workplace filled with respect and obedience (Eph 6:5-7)

Fellowship in the workplace by not having favoritism (Eph 6:9)

Fellowship in the workplace by doing everything for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)

Fellowship in the workplace should be a duty (Rom 13:7)

#### EXPLAINING THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP (ACTS 18:18-21)

##### *Discipleship with co-workers (18)*

Co-workers that help in the growth of the Church (1 Cor 3:6)

Co-workers who are representatives of the Church (2 Cor 8:23)

Co-workers in spreading the gospel (1 Thess 3:2)

Co-workers who ministers to others (Phil 4:3)

##### *Discipleship takes time (19-20)*

Takes time so that a full understanding will be received (Philem 6)

Takes time to gain wisdom (Ps 90:12)

Takes time to accomplish a specific purpose (Est 4:12-14)

Takes time because of God's arrangement (1 Cor 12:18)

##### *Discipleship through mentoring (21)*

Mentors that provide sound teaching (2 Tim 1:13-14)

Mentors that present the word of God as it actually is (1 Thess 2:13)

Mentors that present the truths of the faith (1 Tim 4:6)

Mentors that follow Christ (1 Cor 11:1-2)

#### EXPLAINING THROUGH TEACHING (ACTS 18:24-26)

##### *Teaching using God's Word (24)*

Teaching God's Word because it is trustworthy and true (2 Peter 3:5-7)

Teaching God's Word because it has the power of God in it (Rom 1:16-17)

Teaching God's Word because it is the sword of the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:17)

Teaching God's Word because it is living and enduring (1 Peter 1:23)

Teaching God's Word because it revives the soul (Ps 19:7)

##### *Teaching accurately with sound doctrine (25-26)*

Teaching sound doctrine because it must be taught (Titus 2:1)

Teaching sound doctrine to help those who will not put up with it (2 Tim 4:2-5)

Teaching sound doctrine to be a good leader (Titus 1:9)

Teaching sound doctrine to refute false doctrines (1 Tim 6:3-5)

#### EXPLAINING THROUGH COMMITMENT (ROM 16:3-4)

##### *Commitment in work (3)*

Commitment in the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58)

Commitment because God will not forget our work (Heb 6:10)

Commitment in work so that others will praise God (Matt 5:16)

Commitment in work so that we are a good example to others (Titus 2:7-8)

##### *Commitment regardless of opposition (4)*

Commitment because believers can expect opposition (2 Tim 3:12)  
Commitment we should always be prepared to face opposition (Luke 10:3)  
Commitment because we should be willing to die for God (Matt 16:25)  
Commitment because of God's unshakable power (Heb 12:28)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

The Ministry of Apollos in Ephesus and Corinth Acts 18:24-28

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

## Lesson Background and Key Verse

### Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

When you hear the phrase power couple, who comes to mind? Some might think of historical matches, like Cleopatra and Marc Antony. Others may consider more recent examples, such as Beyoncé and Jay-Z. It's not hard to understand that the phrase refers to those who wield great influence. It's almost too basic to point out that the phrase requires exactly two people, usually who are married or otherwise romantically involved. Although conflict can arise in such unions, part of their power is found in common purpose. They often work together toward artistic growth, social change, or economic gain, etc. Their shared goal is not a compromise; they both believe whole-heartedly in the worthiness of their prize and work cooperatively to attain it. When that shared vision is lost, the power of the couple falters, and often the bond between the two dissolves. Lasting and happy power couples complement each other. The strengths of one fill in the weakness of the other, and vice versa. Although they may have differing roles, neither partner is considered superior or more valuable than the other. The sum of their parts is greater than what each would be individually. And so it is with the power couple we meet in today's lesson.

The book of Acts begins in Jerusalem and ends in Rome. The military and political center of the first century, Rome had a significant Jewish population. Christianity came to Rome early, likely within a few months after the resurrection of Christ. On the Day of Pentecost, visitors from Rome heard the gospel preached, and undoubtedly some of them were baptized (Acts 2:10, 41). Then they returned home to spread Christianity in the imperial city. That spread seems to have been confined to Jews for many years. As a result, Christians of Jewish background coexisted with unbelieving Jews in tight urban spaces, jockeying for control of various synagogues. Tensions grew; violence resulted. Rather than sort out the instigators, Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from the city, whether Christian or non-Christian, in AD 49. Jews were not readmitted to the city until the death of Claudius in AD 54. These events form the backdrop of Paul's meeting two Jews from Rome, Priscilla and Aquila, in Corinth in about AD 51. In the meantime, Christians of Gentile background in Rome established house churches (Romans 16:5, 10-11, 14-15), a development that caused some tension when Jewish Christians returned to the city.

### Key Verse: Rom 16:3-4

*3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

**Acts 18:1.** Without explaining the circumstances Luke simply stated, **After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.** The cities of Athens and Corinth, though only 50 miles apart, were quite different. Athens was noted for its culture and learning, Corinth for its commerce and profligacy. Corinth was located just south of a narrow isthmus which joined the peninsula called Peloponnesus to Achaia to the north. Land trade moving north and south went through Corinth as did sea trade going east and west. Corinth possessed two seaport cities—Lechaem two miles to the west on the Gulf of Corinth which opened to the Adriatic Sea, and Cenchrea, seven miles to the southeast which brought trade from the Aegean Sea. The southern tip of the Peloponnesus Peninsula was dangerous for ocean travel, so ships would put into port at one of Corinth's seaports and have their cargoes carried across to the other side of the isthmus for shipping there. In 146 B.C. the Romans razed Corinth. However, its strategic location would not permit the city to die. It was rebuilt a century later in 46 B.C. As one would expect from a city supported by commerce and travelers, Corinth was marked by profligate and licentious living. It was a center for the worship of

Aphrodite, the goddess of love, who promoted immorality in the name of religion. Politically, Corinth was a Roman colony and capital of the province of Achaia. Some insights into Paul's emotions as he came to Corinth are seen in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. His acknowledged weakness, fear, and much trembling may have been due to several factors: (1) He came alone. (2) The difficulties he had faced since coming to Macedonia may have filled him with apprehension as to what would happen in Corinth (cf. Acts 18:9-10). (3) Even in a world hardened to profligacy Corinth held a reputation for its sexual license. The fact that Paul came to Corinth alone *may* account for his having baptized some people in that city, a practice he normally delegated to others (cf. 1 Cor. 1:14-17).

**18:2.** In Corinth Paul met **Aquila and his wife Priscilla**. Aquila was a **Jew**, originally from **Pontus**, a province in northeast Asia Minor south of the Black Sea. Displaced from Rome because of an edict in A.D. 49 or 50 from **Claudius for all the Jews to leave Rome**, Aquila and Priscilla had come to Corinth to ply their trade. (Claudius reigned from A.D. 41 to 54; see the list of Roman emperors at Luke 2:1.) Suetonius (A.D. 69?-140), a biographer of Roman emperors, described what may have been the occasion for such a decree. In his *Life of Claudius* (25.4) he referred to the constant riots of the Jews at the instigation of Chrestus. Possibly the name Chrestus is a reference to Christ. Whether Aquila and Priscilla were Christians before they met Paul is not known. Because Aquila was called "a Jew" did not mean he knew Christ (cf. Apollos, a Jew; Acts 18:24). Nor can it be argued that Paul lived with them because they were believers; he stayed with them because they were tentmakers (v. 3). Several times Priscilla's name is given before Aquila's (vv. 18-19, 26; Rom. 16:3). This *may* be due to her noble family background.

**18:3.** Their mutual trade was **tent-making**. The term used here is *skēnopoioi*, which some say includes working in leather. Perhaps leather was used in the tents as was goat's hair, for which Paul's home province of Cilicia was well known. As is still common in the Middle East, a workman's shop was downstairs and his living quarters upstairs.

**18:4.** Once again Paul, according to his custom, began his work of evangelism **in the synagogue** (cf. 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:2, 10, 17; 18:19; 19:8).

**18:5.** With the arrival of **Silas and Timothy... from Macedonia** (cf. 17:14-15), **Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching**. The verb translated "devoted... exclusively" is *syneicheto* (from *synechō*) which here in the passive means "to be constrained." Several factors about Silas and Timothy's arrival encouraged Paul: (1) The pair evidently brought financial aid from Macedonia (cf. 2 Cor. 11:9; Phil 4:15). Because of this monetary gift it was no longer necessary for Paul to pursue a trade and he could give himself totally to the work of the gospel. (2) The good news about the steadfastness of the Thessalonian church refreshed Paul (cf. 1 Thes. 3:6-8). (3) Their companionship would have been an encouragement to the apostle. His message was the same as the one he learned on the Damascus Road: **Jesus is the Christ**, that is, the Messiah (cf. Acts 2:36; 3:18, 20; 17:3; 18:28).

**18:6.** Once again is seen the pattern of Jewish opposition to the gospel, followed by Paul's subsequent turning **to the Gentiles** (cf. 13:7-11, 46; 14:2-6; 17:5; 19:8-9; 28:23-28). Paul's shaking **out his clothes** parallels Paul's and Barnabas' shaking dust from their feet (13:51). When Paul said, **Your blood be on your own heads**, he was referring to their destruction and their own **responsibility** for it (cf. Ezek. 33:1-6).

**18:7-8.** After **Paul left the synagogue**, he found a fortunate location for preaching the gospel to the assembly of the saints **next door in the house of Titius Justus**. He was probably a Gentile, for he is called **a worshiper of God** (cf. 16:14; 17:4). In addition, **Crispus, the synagogue ruler**, with **his family believed**. He would have been well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, and his conversion undoubtedly was an impetus for **many more Corinthians** to be converted.

**18:9-11.** Some threatening circumstances must have prompted this **vision from the Lord**. Perhaps this was God's response to Paul's vow (cf. v. 18). The Lord urged **Paul to keep on** ministering in Corinth, assuring him that **no... harm** would come. No doubt **Paul** welcomed this word because of recent attacks against him in other cities (cf. 17:5, 13) and in Corinth itself (18:6). Paul obediently followed the Lord's direction and **stayed for a year and a half** (cf. v. 18), second only in length to his two to three years in Ephesus (19:10; 20:31). Interestingly the word used for **people** in 18:10 is *laos*, often used of God's people Israel. Quite clearly, the Lord's plans for the world meant that the church temporarily was to take the place of His Chosen People, the Jews (cf. Rom. 11:11-21).

**18:12.** Verses 12-17 form a critical point in Luke's apologetic. It is important first because of who **Gallio** was, a Roman **proconsul**, governor **of Achaia**. Any judgment pronounced by him would establish legal precedent. Furthermore, Gallio was a brother of Seneca (4 B.C.-A.D. 65), a philosopher of great influence

in Rome. **The unbelieving Jews** were not about to stop opposing **Paul** (cf. v. 6). They **united and brought him into court**.

**18:13-15.** The Jews **charged Paul with persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the Roman law**. Rome did not permit the propagation of new religions. Judaism was an accepted and established belief. These Jews were saying in effect that Christianity was a new and different cult, distinct from Judaism. However, **Gallio** saw it differently. To him Christianity came under the aegis of Judaism and therefore was not a **matter** to be settled in a civil court. This decision was crucial for it was tantamount to legitimatizing Christianity in the eyes of Roman law.

**18:16-17.** The spontaneous outburst of violence against **Sosthenes, the synagogue ruler**, betrayed the spirit of anti-Semitism that lay just beneath the veneer of society in Corinth. The Gentiles in Corinth wanted nothing of the Jews' contentions. Sosthenes had evidently become ruler of the synagogue in place of Crispus and had led in the Jews' charge against Paul. He may well be the same Sosthenes who was later converted to Christianity and was referred to in 1 Corinthians 1:1. Such a minor incident was of **no concern** to **Gallio**. Though there was violence, he was unconcerned about religious matters.

**18:18.** The actual length of Paul's stay **in Corinth** is unclear because the 18 months (v. 11) may be dated from the time of Paul's vision (vv. 9-10) or it may include all of Paul's **time** in Corinth (from v. 5 on). **Paul** then **left** Corinth, heading for his sending church, Antioch on the Orontes River in **Syria**. But **before he left he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea**, Corinth's southeastern port, **because of a vow he had taken**. When Paul made this vow is unstated. He may have made it when he left Troas for Macedonia, or at the beginning of his ministry at Corinth, or more likely, before the Lord gave him the vision (vv. 9-10). During the vow Paul would have let his hair grow. Now the time of the Nazirite vow was over (after about a year and a half), and Paul got a haircut at Cenchrea (cf. Num. 6:1-21). Josephus wrote about some Jews who immediately after a misfortune, shaved their heads and refused to offer sacrifices for 30 days (*Jewish Wars* 2. 15. 1). If this is the case Paul would have cut his hair at the beginning of his vow. But this is somewhat improbable because there is no mention of an illness or other affliction (unless 2 Cor. 12:7-9 fits in here). While Paul was at Corinth he penned 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

**18:19. Priscilla and Aquila** accompanied **Paul** as far as **Ephesus**. Evidently Silas and Timothy remained in Macedonia and Achaia to oversee the churches there. Why Priscilla and Aquila moved to Ephesus is not known. Probably it was for the sake of the gospel. As in every city where there was a **synagogue Paul went in and reasoned with the Jews** (cf. 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:2, 10, 17; 18:4; 19:8).

**18:20-21.** Unlike the obstinate refusal of the Jews in other synagogues to believe, those in **Ephesus** desired further interchange with Paul. However, he was more inclined to press on homeward. Some Greek manuscripts add that Paul's desire to go to Jerusalem in haste was to keep a feast. If this is accurate, probably Paul wanted to observe the Passover.

**18:22.** After landing **at Caesarea** on the Palestinian coast—a voyage of about 500 miles from Ephesus—Paul **went up** (to Jerusalem) **and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch**. "Going up" and "going down" are almost technical terms that refer to going to and leaving Jerusalem's higher elevation.

**18:23.** With great brevity Luke covered the first part of the apostle's third missionary journey. Obviously Luke's aim was to emphasize Paul's ministry in Ephesus. On Paul's way to Ephesus he ministered in **Galatia and Phrygia** (cf. 16:6), **strengthening all the disciples**. No doubt many of them were converts from his second missionary journey. For this reason the incident of 18:24-28 is used to introduce Paul's work in Ephesus.

This episode (18:24-28) and the following (19:1-7) underscore the transitional nature of this phase of church history. It may be assumed from 19:1-7 that Apollos had not received Christian baptism and probably had not received the Holy Spirit. This section of Acts also indicates that Christianity is the logical outgrowth of the Old Testament and of John the Baptist's ministry. In fact, the message of Paul is superior to that of the spiritual giant John the Baptist. Though John's message had reached as far as Alexandria and Ephesus, John's work was brought to fruition only in Christ.

**18:24.** What took place in verses 24-28 occurred after Paul left **Ephesus** (v. 21) and before he returned (19:1). During this interval a church had been started, probably under the influence of Aquila and Priscilla. To this church came the gifted **Apollos** from **Alexandria** in northern Africa. As **a Jew**, he knew **the Scriptures**, that is, the Old Testament, well.

**18:25.** His doctrine regarding **Jesus** was accurate but deficient. Probably this means Apollos did not know about the Holy Spirit's baptism. John's **baptism** symbolized cleansing by God because of repentance

toward God (cf. 19:4). But Christian baptism pictures union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection by means of Spirit baptism (cf. Rom. 6:3-10; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12).

**18:26.** Rather than correct Apollos publicly, **Priscilla and Aquila... invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God** (cf. "the way of the Lord," v. 25) **more adequately.**

**18:27-28.** Armed with this new doctrine **Apollos** crossed the Aegean Sea **to Achaia** (probably at Corinth) where he was mightily used. **He vigorously refuted the Jews** demonstrating **from the Scriptures** (which he knew well, v. 24), **that Jesus is the Messiah.** This was Paul's approach as well (v. 5). So forceful was Apollos' ministry that factious believers at Corinth formed an Apollos party (1 Cor. 1:12). There is no indication that Apollos promoted such a faction and Paul nowhere held him accountable for it.

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Explaining through Fellowship (Acts 18:1-3)**

- 1 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.
- 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.
- 3 So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

### **Fellowship during traveling (1-2)**

*Traveling to lead others to salvation (Acts 8:26-29)*

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

*Traveling to help others understand (Acts 10:22)*

22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say."

*Traveling in obedience to God's call (Heb 11:8)*

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

*Traveling to minister to others (Acts 9:15)*

15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.

*Traveling as directed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:9)*

9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

### **Fellowship in the workplace (3)**

*Fellowship in the workplace filled with respect and obedience (Eph 6:5-7)*

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,

*Fellowship in the workplace by not having favoritism (Eph 6:9)*

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

*Fellowship in the workplace by doing everything for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)*

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

*Fellowship in the workplace should be a duty (Rom 13:7)*

7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

### **Explaining through Discipleship (Acts 18:18-21)**

18 So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent,

21 but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.

### **Discipleship with co-workers (18)**

*Co-workers that help in the growth of the Church (1 Cor 3:6)*

6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

*Co-workers who are representatives of the Church (2 Cor 8:23)*

23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.

*Co-workers in spreading the gospel (1 Thess 3:2)*

2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,

*Co-workers who ministers to others (Phil 4:3)*

3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

### **Discipleship takes time (19-20)**

*Takes time so that a full understanding will be received (Philem 6)*

6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

*Takes time to gain wisdom (Ps 90:12)*

12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

*Takes time to accomplish a specific purpose (Est 4:12-14)*

12 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, 13 he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

*Takes time because of God's arrangement (1 Cor 12:18)*

18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

## **Discipleship through mentoring (21)**

*Mentors that provide sound teaching (2 Tim 1:13-14)*

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

*Mentors that present the word of God as it actually is (1 Thess 2:13)*

13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

*Mentors that present the truths of the faith (1 Tim 4:6)*

6 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

*Mentors that follow Christ (1 Cor 11:1-2)*

1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.

## **Explaining through Teaching (Acts 18:24-26)**

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.

26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

## **Teaching using God's Word (24)**

*Teaching God's Word because it is trustworthy and true (2 Peter 3:5-7)*

5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

*Teaching God's Word because it has the power of God in it (Rom 1:16-17)*

16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

*Teaching God's Word because it is the sword of the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:17)*

17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

*Teaching God's Word because it is living and enduring (1 Peter 1:23)*

23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

*Teaching God's Word because it revives the soul (Ps 19:7)*

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

## **Teaching accurately with sound doctrine (25-26)**

*Teaching sound doctrine because it must be taught (Titus 2:1)*

1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

*Teaching sound doctrine to help those who will not put up with it (2 Tim 4:2-5)*

2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

*Teaching sound doctrine to be a good leader (Titus 1:9)*

9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

*Teaching sound doctrine to refute false doctrines (1 Tim 6:3-5)*

3 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5 and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

## **Explaining through Commitment (Rom 16:3-4)**

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

### **Commitment in work (3)**

*Commitment in the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58)*

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

*Commitment because God will not forget our work (Heb 6:10)*

10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

*Commitment in work so that others will praise God (Matt 5:16)*

16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

*Commitment in work so that we are a good example to others (Titus 2:7-8)*

7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8 and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

### **Commitment regardless of opposition (4)**

*Commitment because believers can expect opposition (2 Tim 3:12)*

12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

*Commitment we should always be prepared to face opposition (Luke 10:3)*

3 Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

*Commitment because we should be willing to die for God (Matt 16:25)*

25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

*Commitment because of God's unshakable power (Heb 12:28)*

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

*The Ministry of Apollos in Ephesus and Corinth Acts 18:24-28*

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, arrived in Ephesus. He was an eloquent speaker, well-versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm he spoke and taught accurately the facts about Jesus, although he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak out fearlessly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately. 27 When Apollos wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he assisted greatly those who had believed by grace, 28 for he refuted the Jews vigorously in public debate, demonstrating from the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

Apollos is a most fascinating fellow. Thanks to Luke's description of him, we know that he is a very bright and gifted Jew from Alexandria. This Egyptian city had a great impact on Christianity. It was here that the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) was written. The New Testament writers often cited Scripture from the Septuagint. One of the early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (Codex Alexandrinus), along with other important New Testament manuscripts, was obtained in Alexandria. Alexandrian Jews were among those with whom Stephen debated (Acts 6:9). If Apollos was "**well-versed in the scriptures**" (Acts 18:24) it was probably in Alexandria that he became a great student of the Old Testament.

Apollos was not only very knowledgeable in the Old Testament Scriptures; he was also a very powerful speaker. (He almost seems to be a replacement for Stephen, who died as a martyr for the faith – Acts 6:8—8:1.) Luke tells us a great deal about Apollos, but he also informs us that there were some gaps in his understanding of the gospel. The question is, "What were these gaps?" While students of Scripture differ on this point, I have concluded to my own satisfaction that Apollos was unaware that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Let me suggest the evidence that pointed me in this direction.

1. We are told that Apollos knew the Old Testament Scriptures well. This was his area of expertise and strength. Through the Old Testament Scriptures, he had been instructed in "**the way of the Lord**" (Acts 18:24). The term rendered "**Lord**"<sup>14</sup> here need not refer to Jesus, but can just as easily refer to God the Father. But even if "**Lord**" here refers to Jesus, it would simply mean that Apollos knew many of the facts about Jesus, facts about Him that were revealed by the Old Testament prophets. Apollos knew a lot about the Messiah who was to come, yet without knowing Jesus personally as the Messiah.

2. If this is true (that Apollos had not yet personally come to trust in Jesus as the promised Messiah), it in no way undercuts the importance of Apollos to Luke's argument. Think of it this way. Paul's normal method of preaching in the synagogue was to begin by proving from the Old Testament that Messiah must suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. Then Paul went on to show how Jesus fulfilled these Old Testament prophecies. From Luke's description of Apollos, we can see that Apollos' message was precisely the same as the first part of Paul's presentation of the gospel (from the Old Testament Scriptures). The problem with Apollos was that he did not yet know the second half of Paul's message – he did not yet know that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfillment of these prophecies about Messiah. Apollos' message is further confirmation of the gospel as preached by Paul. Independently of each other, both reached the same conclusion: the

Messiah must be rejected by His people, crucified, and raised again. And once enlightened by Priscilla and Aquila, the message of Apollos would be precisely that of Paul.

3. Apollos was an Old Testament saint, like those listed in the “hall of faith” in Hebrews 11. He was like the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8, or Cornelius of Acts 10. He (like other Old Testament saints) believed that Messiah was coming,<sup>15</sup> but they did not, as yet, realize that He had come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

4. The story of the further instruction of Apollos by Priscilla and Aquila is placed just before Luke’s account of the 12 brethren in Ephesus who were disciples of John the Baptist, who had never received believers’ baptism or the gift of the Holy Spirit. Whatever Apollos was lacking, it seems to be the same thing the 12 disciples lacked. And since those in the house of Cornelius and the 12 Paul met in Ephesus were clearly saved, then baptized, and finally baptized by the Holy Spirit, we can safely assume (I believe) that this was the case with Apollos as well.

Thus, I don’t see how we can conclude that Apollos had come to trust in Jesus as the promised Messiah until after Priscilla and Aquila informed him more accurately. He knew that Messiah was coming. I believe that he knew Messiah would be rejected by the nation Israel and die for the sins of His people. I believe that Apollos knew that Messiah would be raised from the dead. But what he didn’t know was that Jesus was the fulfillment of Israel’s messianic hopes. Thanks to Priscilla and Aquila, he does now.

Why does Luke bother to include this information about Apollos? As mentioned above, I believe the similarity between the preaching of Paul and that of Apollos was further confirmation of the truth and accuracy of Paul’s gospel. The gospel was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, and Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies of the coming of Messiah. I believe there is another reason why Apollos is included in this account: it enables us to better understand Paul’s references to Apollos in his epistles. Aside from references to Apollos in Acts (18:24; 19:1), we find Paul frequently referring to him in his First Corinthian Epistle (1:12; 3:4, 5, 6, 22; 4:6; 16:12). Beyond this, he is mentioned only one other time (Titus 3:13). Apollos is noteworthy because of his great gift as a speaker and also because of his independence from Paul:

With regard to our brother Apollos: I strongly encouraged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was simply not his intention to come now. He will come when he has the opportunity (1 Corinthians 16:12).

Obviously, Apollos did not take orders from Paul, nor need he do so. Apollos could sense when it was God’s time for him to visit Corinth, where he had been before (see Acts 18:27-28; 19:1).

I believe there is at least one more reason why Apollos is mentioned in Acts 18 and 19. There is a kind of alternation that takes place in Ephesus and Corinth. Paul spent a good while in Corinth (at least 18 months according to Acts 18:11), and then he moved on to Ephesus, where he briefly ministered before leaving for Syria (Acts 18:19-21). Apollos seems to have arrived in Ephesus after Paul had left (Acts 18:24-26). It was here that Priscilla and Aquila (whom Paul had left behind in Ephesus) more fully explained the way of God to him. From Ephesus, Apollos went on to Corinth in Achaia (Acts 18:27; 19:1), where he ministered. It is interesting to note Luke’s assessment of Apollos’ ministry:

When Apollos wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, **he assisted greatly those who had believed by grace** (Acts 18:27, emphasis mine).

According to Luke, the ministry of Apollos was not evangelism as much as it was edification. He was instrumental in assisting those who had believed. It was Paul who was instrumental in the conversion of the Corinthian saints; it was Apollos who followed up with these new believers, strengthening their faith by his strong affirmation of the gospel as Paul had proclaimed it. This perfectly squares with Paul’s words to the Corinthians:

I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused it to grow (1 Corinthians 3:6).

After Apollos left Ephesus for Corinth, Paul seems to have arrived for his much more lengthy ministry there (Acts 19:1ff.). All this alternation between Paul and Apollos shows how God graciously works to save and to sanctify His own people. The spread of the gospel was not the work of just one man – Paul – but was the work of a plurality (a team, if you would) of people, who were used of God in a powerful way.

*(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/seeing-paul-perspective-acts-181-8211-197>)*

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

We learn many things from studying the ministry of Priscilla and Aquila. We see a married couple who worked and ministered as a team. There was no competition between them, whether they were building tents or building up the people of God. We see a family willing to relocate whenever God called them, supporting themselves in the original bi-vocational ministry. Their obedience to God's will made them cherished companions to Paul. We see a woman and her husband whom Paul considered to be his "co-workers," a designation of high praise. And we have an example of a sincere and talented preacher receiving private corrective teaching from wiser believers. Apollos's teaching had omitted a crucial Christian doctrine. The discreet yet powerful witness of this godly and faithful married couple was the right remedy at the right time. Their investment in Apollos yielded benefits when he moved to Corinth to minister among their friends in that church (see 1 Corinthians 3:6). Whether single like Paul or part of a couple like Priscilla and Aquila, all God's people have responsibilities to one another. We must "hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess [and] consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:23-24).

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary***

Corinth - Whenever Paul visited a city, he set up his tent-making business. Paul entered Corinth and became acquainted with a Jewish couple who were in the same trade named Priscilla and Aquila. As victims of Roman persecution, they had been run out of Italy when all Jews were expelled from Rome. When they settled in Corinth, they met Paul. It's unclear if Aquila and Priscilla understood the Gospel from Paul as they worked together, or they might have already been believers. Either way, the three became a significant force in establishing the Corinthian church.

Ephesus - Paul stayed in Corinth quite a while, about 18 months. When he decided to leave and return to his home church in Antioch, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him. They traveled with him to Ephesus and organized a church there in their home.

Apollos - While Priscilla and Aquila were in Ephesus, a Jew named Apollos arrived from Alexandria in Egypt and began teaching in the synagogue. Apollos spoke with great knowledge and persuasion from the Old Testament Scriptures and he proclaimed Jesus to the synagogue. However, Apollos only knew the teaching of John the Baptist, not the full story of Jesus. When Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos, the husband and wife ministry team took him aside and began teaching him the full Gospel and story of Christ. Later, Paul wrote letters to the churches he helped start, and he addressed Priscilla and Aquila, who faithfully continued to minister in Ephesus with Timothy (2 Tim. 4:19). Paul described the couple as co-laborers with him. Scripture does not give the details, but at some point in Paul's ministry, the two of them had risked their lives for Paul.

You Spread the Good News - Priscilla and Aquila's names are always mentioned together. Tradition states the couple went to death together in Rome for spreading the Gospel. Biblical accounts of faithful ministries like that of Priscilla and Aquila ought to energize us for the cause of Christ. Are you willing to open your home for biblical discussions? Are you willing to confront those who may not be teaching Christian truth correctly, gently helping them understand the truth?