

Apollos and the Missing Link



Acts 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more perfectly. 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: For he mightily convinced the Jews, publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

There have been and still are many godly men and women in the world who are boldly sharing what they have received of the good news that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God.

Like Apollos many get their information from a mixture of sources.

This can be direct from reading and study of the scriptures. It can be augmented by hearing various explanations from people and reading books.

A lot we get from those we associate with or encounter.

Nothing wrong with any of that.

As a result though we may expect to see many with differing variations from what constitutes the message of repentance and remission of sins through the name of Jesus.

For example, if we sit down together members of the Salvation Army and those of a Pentecostal or Baptist group we would find that while there is agreement on a core of truth there would be other matters that while essential to one group would be optional to the others.

If it is only religion, fair enough.

If we want to know the way that leads to eternal life we must listen to the whole good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of the good seed that the Son of Man is sowing is to produce sons of the kingdom. If any part is missing from this vital, miraculous message then it will not produce sons of the kingdom.

Apollos, like many today, was missing only one part of the good news of Jesus the Christ.

This part which was privately explained to him by Aquila and Priscilla was concerning baptism in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

Apollos had already heard of John the Baptist's baptism of repentance for remission of sins and assumedly had so been baptised, either by John or one of his disciples.

While we are not told in detail what Apollos was enlightened with we are informed in more detail by that which transpired in a similar situation shortly after.

Acts 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus (Apollos was lately come from Ephesus): and finding certain disciples, he said to them, have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And they said to him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said to them, into what then were you baptized? And they

said, into John's baptism. Then said Paul, John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied.

Just as Aquila and Priscilla had noticed that Apollos was missing something vital, so Paul noticed that these disciples lacked something. Not in the absence of words but an absence of life. He suspected they had not received the Holy Spirit so he asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they had believed, He was referring to a conversion experience, following hearing and believing the message of repentance and remission of sins through the name of Jesus Christ where the hearers pass from death to life.

In Paul's experience it was normal to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit upon 'gladly receiving the word and being baptised in water in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins.' This is God's promise to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

As with Apollos, something was not normal in this case of these twelve disciples.

Once they said they had not heard of the Holy Spirit Paul knew they had not heard the entire good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

They had heard something, but not the complete good news which is the power of God to salvation to those who believe it.

As conversion was always accompanied by water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins Paul asked how were they baptised – into what name?

They had been baptised in accordance with the truth they had received, in John's baptism. They needed to hear that John's ministry and baptism was pointing to the Christ/Messiah Jesus of Nazareth and that all needed to put their faith entirely upon Him.

When they heard this they were all baptised in the name of Jesus Christ.

Why? Because remission of sins is in/through/by the name of Jesus Christ. Neither is there salvation in any other name.

Having now heard the whole good news of Jesus Christ, the message of repentance and remission of sins, of the kingdom of God, the one sharing this message laid hands on them and they all received the Holy Spirit. Now they were born of water and the Spirit, born from above, children of God.

You may wonder; 'What if you have already received the Holy Spirit?'

God has ensured we know the answer to this question by having the account of the conversion of the household of Cornelius recorded in the book of Acts. Peter speaking;

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; Not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God the Judge of the living and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all of them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Lord Jesus in some ancient texts).

This was the order of baptisms in my own case. By the great grace of God I was baptised in the Holy Spirit standing in a street called The Lanes in Brighton in August 1966.

At that time I had no substantial information about the Lord Jesus the Christ. I soon went along to a local Pentecostal group hoping I would learn more there. And I did learn quite a bit about Who Jesus of Nazareth is and what He accomplished on the cross for the sins of the whole world.

But I was not told that I should be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of my sins.

Why not?

Because even though it is all over the book of the Acts of the Apostles they had not themselves heard this from any messenger sent by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Just as Apollos taught that which he had received so also do most evangelicals of various varieties pass on that which they have received.

If it were just a matter of religion then we could do as we please, think what we please, teach what we please.

But the good news that is by the revelation of Jesus Christ is the power of God to salvation to those who believe it.

But we must first hear it.

Here it is.

Please pray and ask God who is not willing that any should perish to show what is the power in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sin and consequently salvation.

If you'd like to discuss please email me in the first instance.

Colin Thompson, Gateshead, England. 07804 615 945

<http://www.followingjesuschrist.co.uk/> : colin@followingjesuschrist.co.uk