

Home and Back Again

Finishing Mission No. 2 and beginning Mission No. 3

Acts 18:18-28



Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

This is a summary of Paul's return journey
– but there are more details to come
Paul must have sensed that his time there was
completed for the present.
He made more visits later.



Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken.



Cenchrea was the east facing port town for Corinth.
Why did he make a vow?

What does it tell us about Paul as a Jewish man?

... he had his hair cut off ...
because of a vow he had taken.



What did he do?

The rules for a Nazirite vow are seen in Numbers 6:18

What more needed to be done to complete the vow?

He would need to go to the temple at Jerusalem.

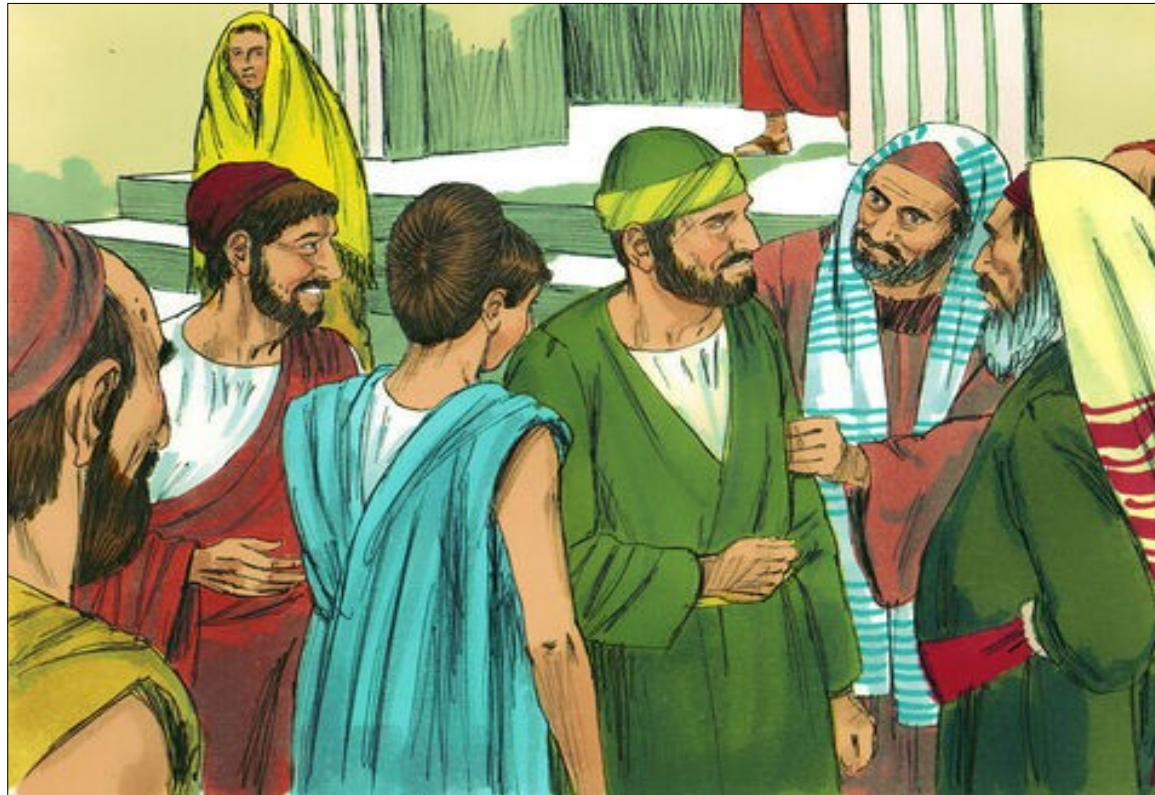
It has nothing to do with Nazareth – it is a different spelling.

They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila.



Paul stayed in Ephesus for a brief time, but left Priscilla and Aquila to continue the work there.

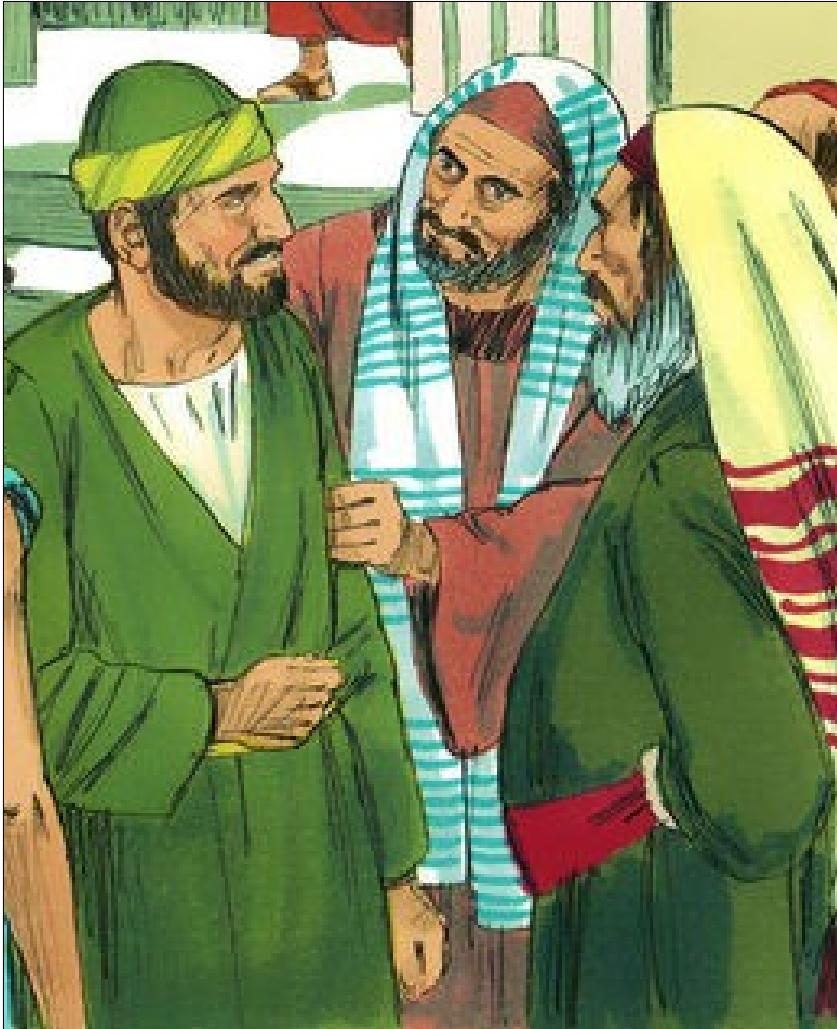
He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.



In Ephesus, Paul went back to the same strategy
- the synagogue was his first stop!
He wants his fellow Jews to come to Jesus.

Concern for his 'family's' spiritual state.

When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will."

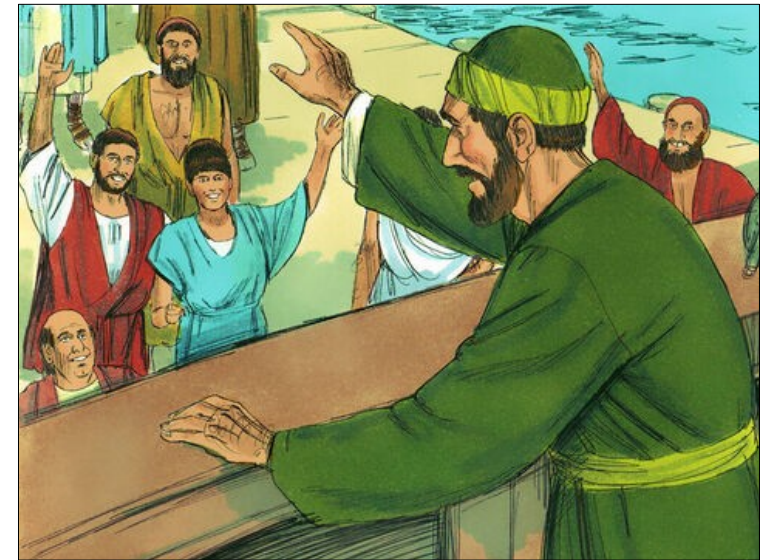


Acts 18:21 but he took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; (NKJV)

Their response this time was much more positive and friendly. But he felt an urgency to return to Jerusalem and then to Antioch.

He recognised our future plans are all in God's hands.
cf. James 4:13-15

Then he set sail from Ephesus. When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.



After the sea journey, he may have briefly stayed with Philip and the church at Caesarea before going to Jerusalem.

Cf Acts 8:40

he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

Up and down?

As some manuscripts say, Paul first went (up) to Jerusalem to complete his vow and briefly greet the church there.

People went UP to the capital – Jerusalem.



He then went (down) to Antioch to report back to mission base.

After spending some time in Antioch,



Paul would have wanted to report back to the church about the successful mission into Europe and to renew fellowship after being away for over 2 years.

After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and travelled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

We don't know how long he stayed there but the desire to bless the new believers moved him on.



Paul was wanting to help the churches that had begun on the first mission.

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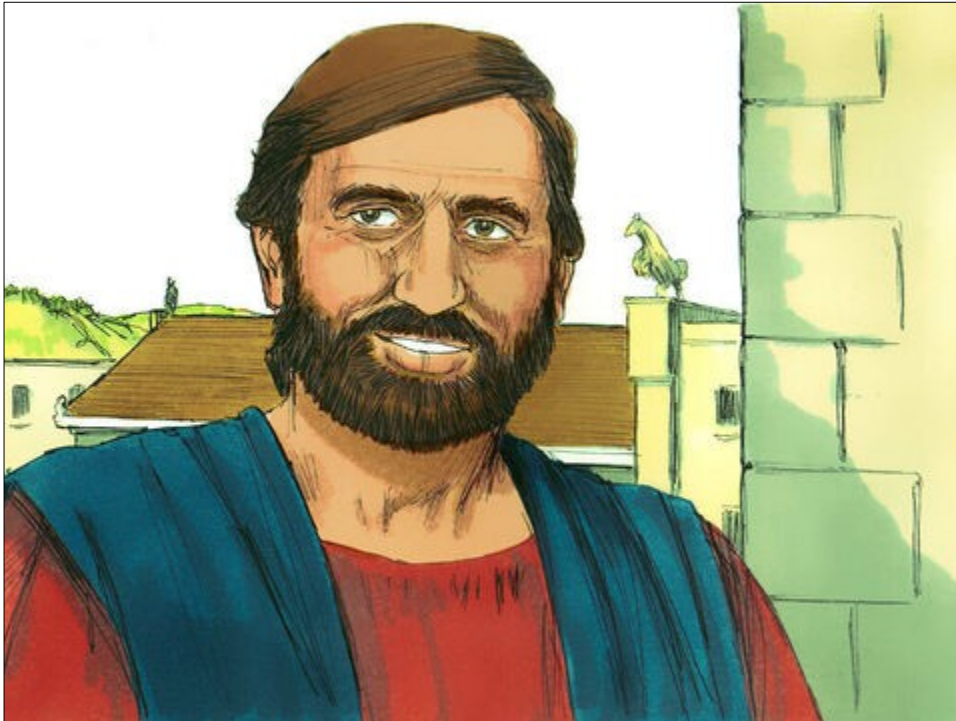


This time on his 3rd mission he travelled overland again - eventually arriving back at Ephesus.

On the second mission, the Holy Spirit had prevented him from taking the route to Ephesus, but now the way is open – in God's timing.

We leave Paul for a while on his journey and see what had been happening in Ephesus after he left there.

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus.

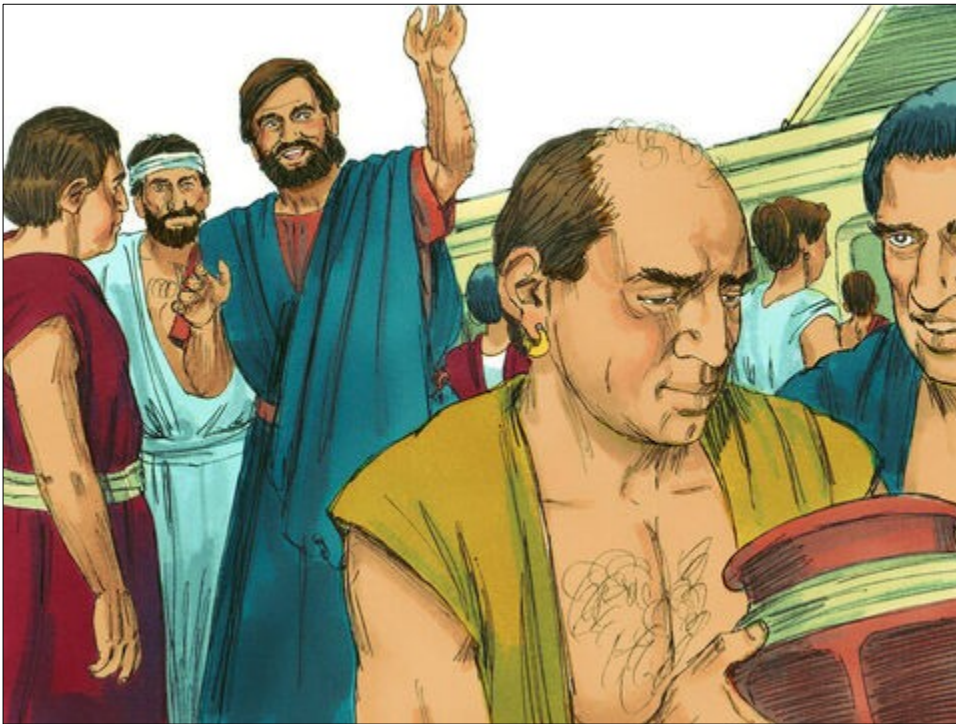


We are introduced to Apollos. He came from the large scholarly Jewish community at Alexandria on the north African coast.

It seems that he came to Ephesus on his own initiative – with the Lord's over-ruling.



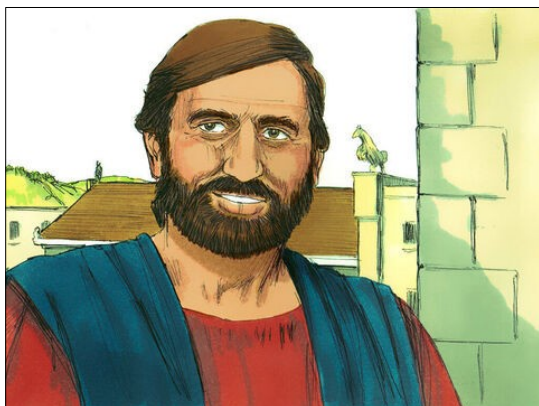
He was a learned man,
with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been
instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour
and taught about Jesus accurately,



He knew his Bible very well.
He was a very good speaker
in both the content and the
delivery of his message.

He had come to spread what
he had learned about Jesus
as the Messiah.

He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.



So far – so good, but there was more.

He was somehow acquainted with the very influential ministry of John the Baptist.

John taught that the Kingdom of God had arrived in the person of Jesus as the promised Messiah.

He appears to have known about Jesus' atoning death and resurrection but was unaware of the coming and work of the Holy Spirit.

He was about to discover these wonderful truths.

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue.

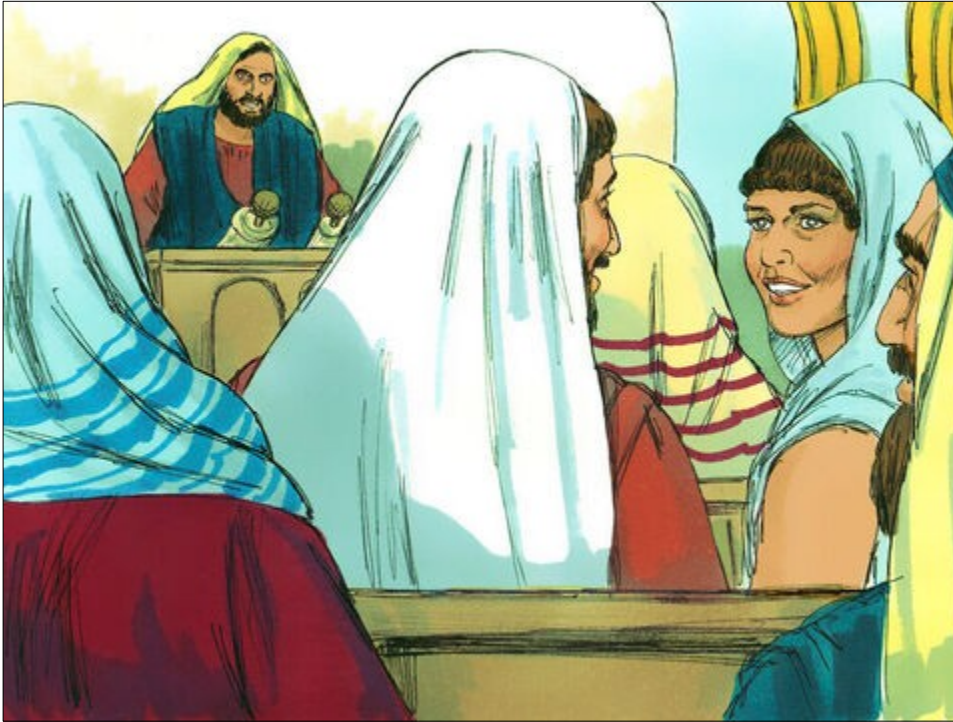


He was keen to share his message with his fellow Jews.
– rather like John the Baptist.

What do we understand by the description – boldly?

He wasn't afraid of opposition and held his views with deep conviction.

When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

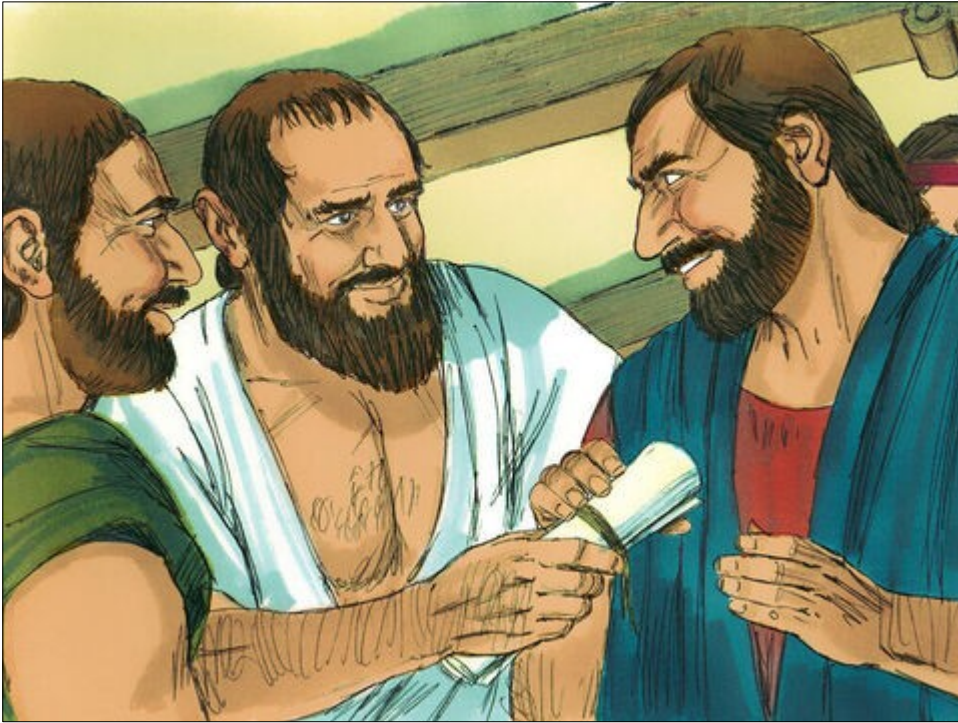


Priscilla and Aquila were at the worship service and heard him speak.

They knew there was something missing. They took him aside (to their home? Remember they are a hospitable couple).

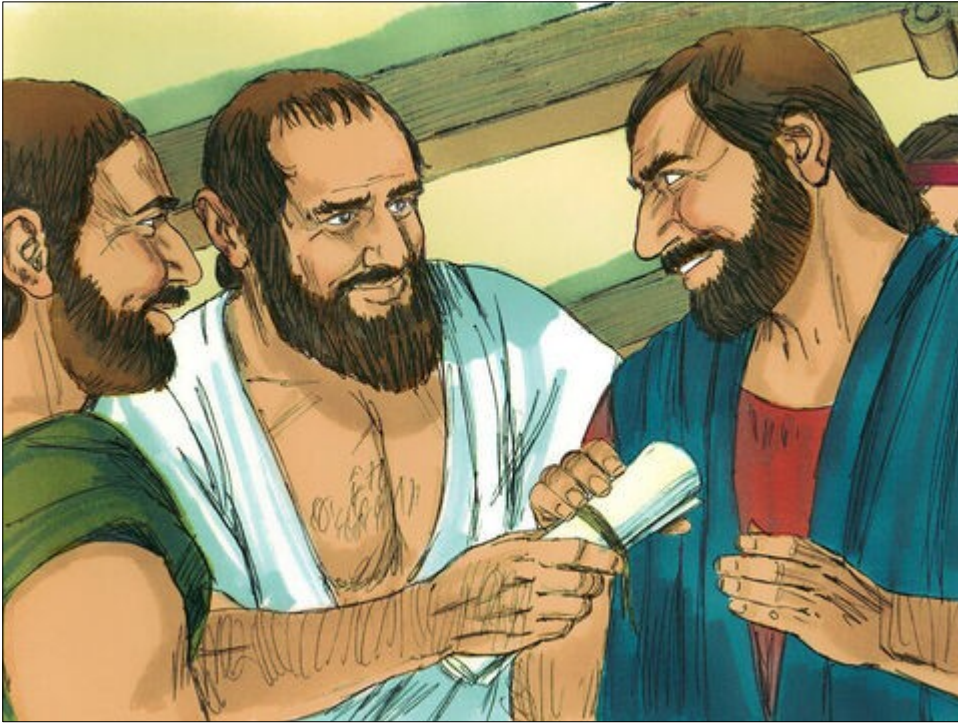
They graciously explained the new details about the Saviour and the Holy Spirit (more adequately!). He was willing to listen and learn – and came to a better understanding of faith in the Lord Jesus.

When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him.



Apollos met with other believers in Ephesus who recognised his gifts and they encouraged him when he expressed a desire to go to Corinth.

When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him.

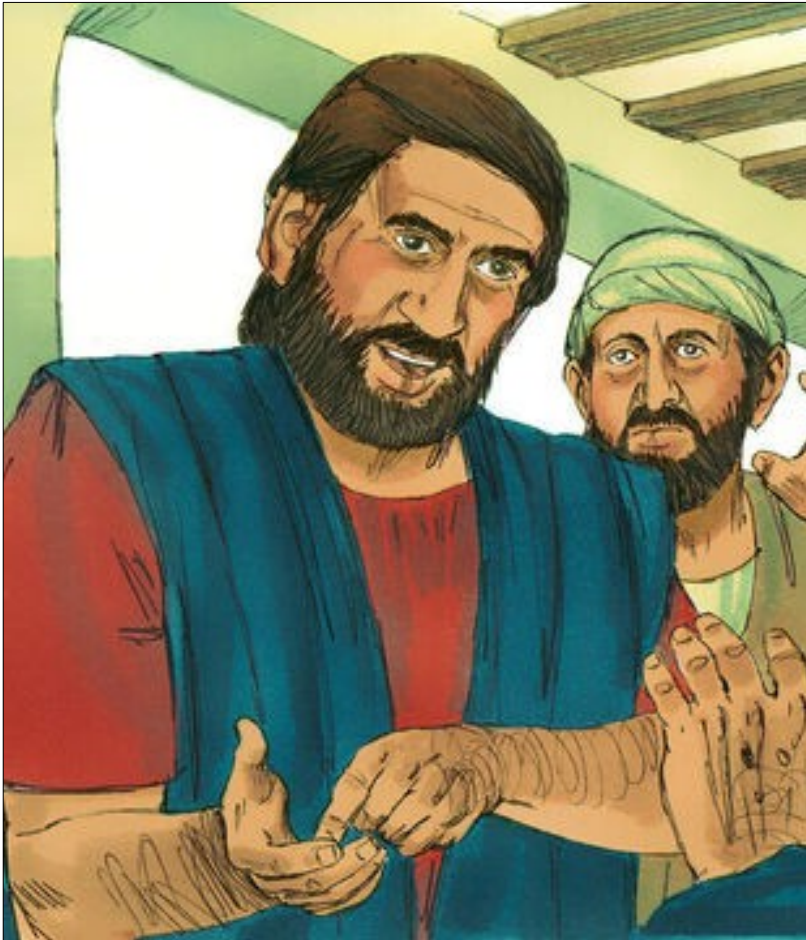


They realised that his background would be ideal to minister in the Grecian cultural setting of Corinth.

The church gave him letters of recommendation as a means of introducing him to the fellowship at Corinth.

This was one of the ways of church inter-communication
People didn't just drift from church to church.

On arriving,
he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.

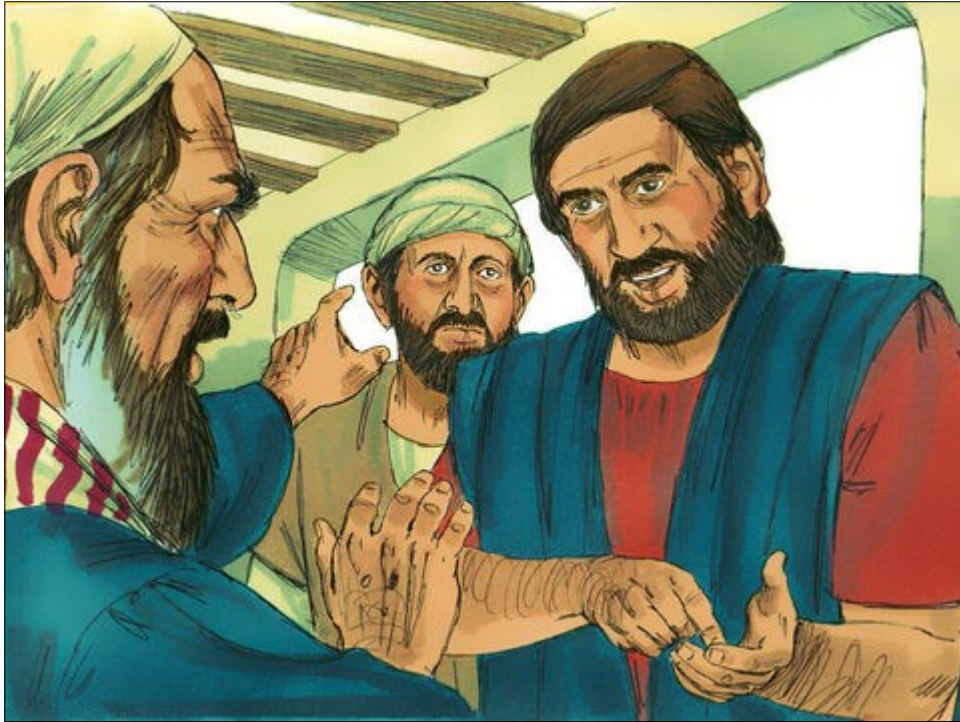


God had sent him to the
right place.

He had come to give!
And was a blessing to the
believers.

Again we see an
acknowledgement that it is
by the grace of God that we
have come to believe.

For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate,

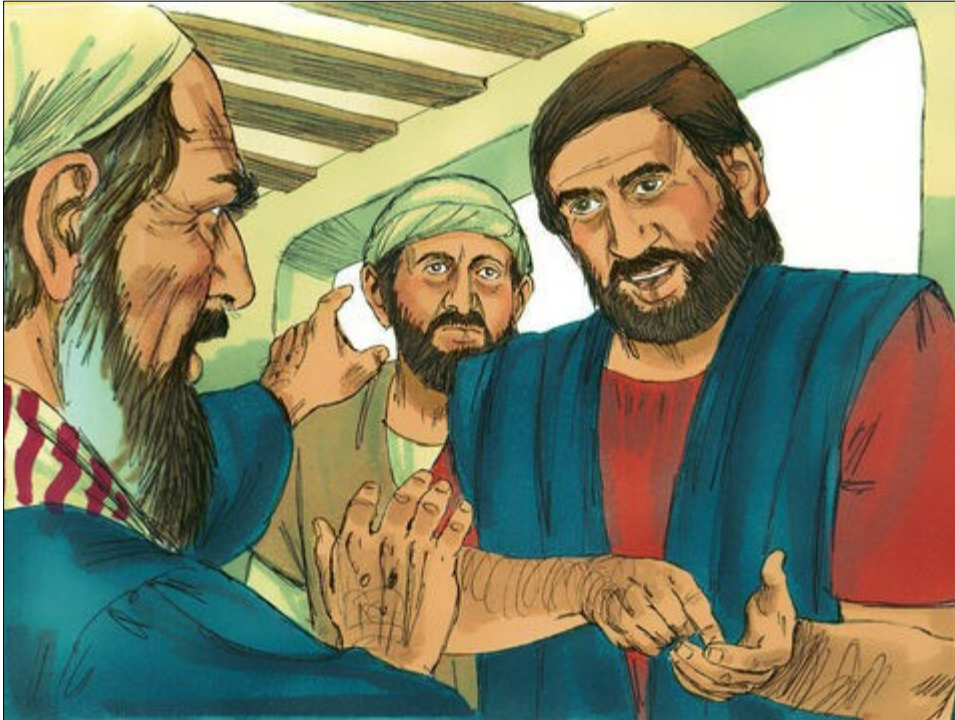


The church continued to experience challenges from the Jews that had rejected Jesus, and perhaps many believers had few resources to combat their arguments.

Apollos was the man for the job.

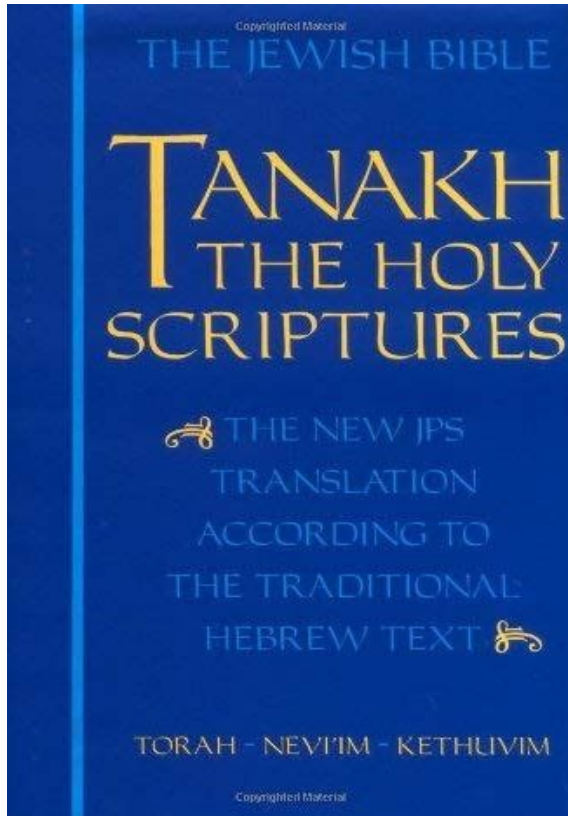
He knew how to deal with objections to the faith.

For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

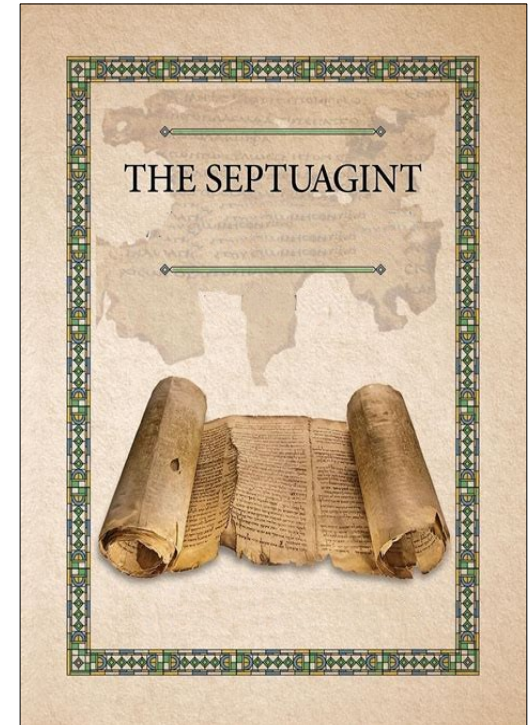


He could clearly make the case for the believers that Jesus really was the Messiah

For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.



The scriptures that Apollos had were what we call the Old Testament.



He knew the Bible and he now knew the Lord about whom the Bible spoke.

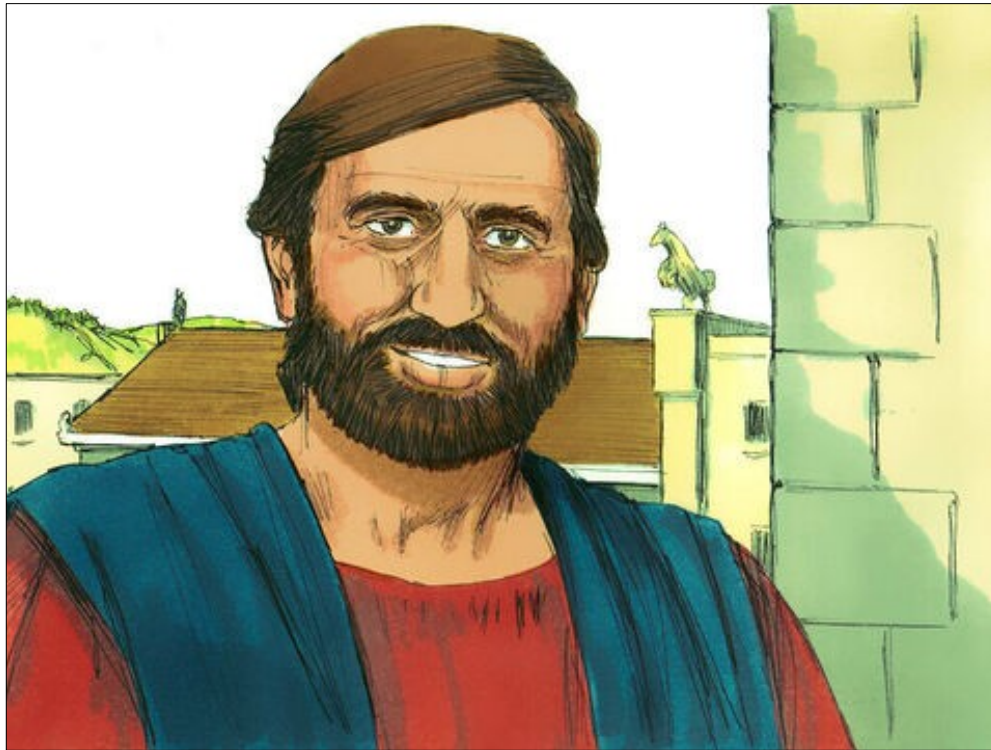
Jesus is the Messiah – the Bible says so.

Having the scriptures explained to the church would greatly strengthen their faith.

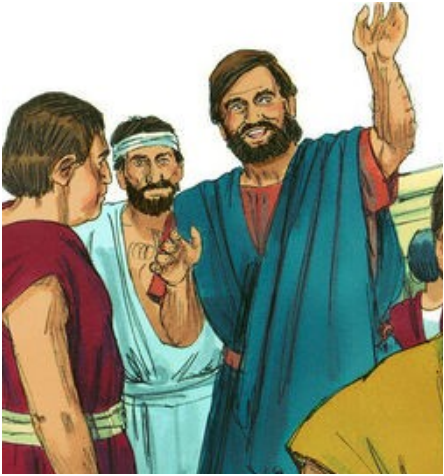
Two relevant applications

At first Apollos knew a lot about Jesus but later he came to know Him better and especially about the working of the Holy Spirit..

The essential truths and the working of the Holy Spirit made the difference for him.



Have they done the same for you?



We can be thankful to God for those whom he calls to 'preach the word' (2 Timothy 4:2)



We can thank God for the helps that He provides in commentaries, devotionals, online ministries etc.

But **ALWAYS** remember to be like the Bereans.
(Acts 17:11)

Test what they say against Scripture as the Holy Spirit gives discernment.

And as we pray for God's guidance and protection as we hear others telling us -'this is what I believe that the Bible says' God will guide us and enable us to walk worthy of our high calling

Colossians 1:10-12 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

