

## Life Group Notes 7/7/2024

Peter Mehegan Following Apollos The Anatomy of Division

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[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

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Note: I have highlighted and cross-referenced suggested discussion questions that arose from this week's message, 7/7. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On rhema vs. logos.](#)
2. [On Alexandria.](#)

\*\*\***Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. \*\*\*

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The message begins with a review of Romans 10:17 This is Mehegan's translation: Now, faith comes from (*ex*, out of) hearing, and hearing through the message/revelation (*rhema*, not *logos*, *i.e.* The revealed word, not the letter) of God or of Christ. (Note: Manuscripts vary on this word.)

1. How is Christianity spread? What is the first step when bringing the news of the Resurrection to a land that has never heard the news?
2. What stirred up your own understanding and made you begin to think the story might be true?
3. Have you ever persuaded someone else to discover that the gospel story is true, and that faith in God is real faith? How? How did that go? Do you have a testimony?

If we are going to learn about characters and personalities from the biblical narrative, the historical and geographical setting is essential. Look up **Acts 18:1** After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. **2** There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to visit them, **3** and he stayed and worked with them because they were tentmakers by

trade, just as he was. **4**Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks alike.

1. Corinth was a new city for Paul. What is Paul's routine?
2. Why does he go to the synagogue first? Whom does he meet there?
3. Why would there be Greeks in the synagogue?
4. What do you know about Priscilla and Aquila?
5. What do you think happened when Paul stayed with them and worked with them? How did they benefit one another mutually?

**Acts 18:5** And when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself fully to the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. **6**But when they opposed and insulted him, he shook out his garments and told them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." **7**So Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titus Justus, a worshiper of God.

1. What were Timothy and Silas doing in Macedonia?
2. What did they bring with them, so that Paul could go into full time ministry? (See Philippians 4:14-16) What do you notice?  
(<https://biblehub.com/context/philippians/4-14.htm>)
3. What does "Jesus is the Christ" even mean?
4. What is the second step in Paul's routine? What moves him from the synagogue to the street?

**Acts 18:8** Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his whole household believed in the Lord. And many of the Corinthians who heard the message believed and were baptized. **9**One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking; do not be silent. **10**For I am with you and no one will lay a hand on you, because I have many people in this city." **11**So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching the word of God among the Corinthians.

1. Explain. What do you see in these facts?
2. Review. What brought Paul to Europe in the first place?
3. What role do visions play in God's guidance? Do you have a testimony?

The stage is now set in Corinth, but Luke's account does not do complete justice to the Corinthians' first encounter with the gospel. Paul describes this encounter in his first letter to the Corinthians. Look up **1 Cor 2:1** When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. **2**For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. **3**I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. **4**My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, **5**so that your faith would not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

1. What do you know of Paul's success in Athens with all the philosophers?
2. Look up Acts 17: [22](#)Then Paul stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious. [23](#)For as I walked around and examined your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore what you worship as something unknown, I now proclaim to you. [24](#)The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by human hands. [25](#)Nor is He served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. [26](#)From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands. [27](#)God intended that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. [28](#)'For in Him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are His offspring.' [29](#)Therefore, being offspring of God, we should not think that the Divine Being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by man's skill and imagination. [30](#)Although God overlooked the ignorance of earlier times, He now commands all people everywhere to repent. [31](#)For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead." [32](#)When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to mock him, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this topic." [33](#)At that, Paul left the Areopagus. [34](#)But some joined him and believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others who were with them. What tools did Paul use in Athens? A demonstration of the Spirit's power? Or did he use eloquent and persuasive words of wisdom? What was the response in Athens?
3. Did he stay a year and a half in Athens? Why not?
4. What, in addition to God's Word and promise would have encouraged Paul to remain in Corinth? How encouraging is God's display of power?
5. Are you more persuaded by words or by actual experience?
6. Look at verse 5 above. On what does your faith rest? The wisdom of men? Or the power of God? How can you tell?
7. Look up 2 Peter 1: [17](#)For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [18](#)And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. [19](#) And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; How did the memory of Peter's experience on the Mount of Transfiguration help buttress his faith? How does experience buttress faith? Do you have a testimony?

Now look up **Acts 18:18**Paul remained in Corinth for quite some time before saying goodbye to the brothers. He had his head shaved in Cenchrea to keep a vow he had made, and then he sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. **19**When they reached Ephesus, Paul parted ways with Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue there and reasoned with the Jews. **20** When they asked him to stay for a while longer, he declined. **21** But as he left, he said, "I will

come back to you if God is willing.” **22** And he set sail from Ephesus. When Paul had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church at Jerusalem. Then he went down to Antioch.

1. Review Paul’s itinerary before coming to Europe in Acts 16 (Follow it on the map): **6**Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in **1a**Asia. **7**After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the **1b**Spirit did not permit them. **8**So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. **9**And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” **10**Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.: When Paul first tried to go to Asia, where Ephesus is a major city, the Holy Spirit hindered him. Now he’s dropping Priscilla and Aquila off, and leaving Ephesus to return to his home church. Can you explain what is going on? Have you ever been led like this?
2. Look at the map below. How is Ephesus on the way to Syria?
3. What is Paul’s first step in a new city? How long does he stay this time?
4. Who stays behind?



**Acts 18:23** After Paul had spent some time in Antioch [Paul’s home church], he traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. **24**Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the Scriptures. **25**He had been instructed in the way of the Lord and was fervent

in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately about Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

1. This is the first time the name of Apollos is mentioned. List the details in his description that Luke thinks are important.
2. How does being eloquent help the delivery and impact of the message?
3. How does being "well versed" in the scriptures help?
4. What is the advantage to being "from Alexandria?" (See the [footnote 2](#))
5. If he is a Jew named "Apollos," what can you guess about his background? What is the origin of his name?
6. What is the baptism of John?
7. John the Baptist said, "*I baptize you with water. There is One coming after me Who goes before me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*" What is the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus?
8. Did Apollos come with eloquent words of wisdom, or with a demonstration of power?

[Acts 18:26](#) And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him in and explained to him the way of God more accurately. [27](#) When Apollos resolved to cross over to Achaia, the

brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him.

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

1. What is Apollos' first step upon arriving in a new city?
2. What did Priscilla and Aquilla notice immediately? What was Apollos lacking that they had witnessed in Corinth?
3. Why do we see Apollos speaking boldly, but no mention is made of Priscilla and Aquilla speaking at all...except to impart Jesus' baptism to Apollos?
4. What is their ministry? How does their ministry differ from that of Apollos and Paul? Is everyone a teacher?
5. Does everyone play a role?
6. Looking at the map again, where is Achaia? Why would Apollos resolve to go to Corinth? What will he see there?
7. What will he do there? Will he do harm or good to the church there?

Continuing with the story, look up [Acts 19:1](#) While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the interior and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples [2](#) and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?"

"No," they answered, "we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." [3](#) "Into what, then, were you baptized?" Paul asked. "The baptism of John," they replied. [4](#) Paul explained: "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

**5**On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. **6**And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. **7**There were about twelve men in all.

1. Where did these twelve disciples come from? Was Apollos' message effective to produce disciples? How was his teaching limited at first?
2. How do we know these were disciples of Apollos, and not of Priscilla and Aquila?
3. How is it possible to be a disciple, never having heard that there be a Holy Spirit? Can you learn from scripture? Can the Spirit teach? How?
4. From whom did they hear of the baptism of John? Who had been their teacher? Why hadn't Priscilla and Aquila taken these disciples aside?
5. What role does Paul play?
6. What is the result? What does the baptism of Jesus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, look like?
7. What role does a teacher's knowledge play in the disciples' encounter and subsequent faith? Where does faith come from?
8. Is there a problem if Apollos plants, knowing that Paul will soon come to fill in the missing lessons?
9. Does this parallel your own experience in any way? Explain.

Now let's look at Apollos' impact on the Corinthians: **1 Cor 1:10***I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree together, so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be united in mind and conviction.***11***My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.***12***What I mean is this: Individuals among you are saying, "I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos," "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."***13***Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?***14***I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,***15***so no one can say that you were baptized into my name.*

1. Paul opens his first letter to the Corinthians like this. Explain what is going on.
2. Review **1 Corinthians 18:8** above. Who is Crispus?
3. How did Apollos bring division? What caused it?
4. "Cephas" is the Aramaic version of the name "Peter." Has Peter been to Corinth? Is it possible that Corinthian Jews had been in Jerusalem on the first day of Pentecost, who heard Cephas speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that day? Could that give a Corinthian Christian "bragging rights?"
5. How does our favorite teacher become a matter to quarrel over?
6. In your experience, how is immaturity often at the root of division?
7. Is immaturity a satanic attack or an expected stage of growth.

8. How did Paul handle the division?
9. Looking at how Paul came first, in fear and trembling, explain why Apollos would be preferred over Paul. Which would you choose?
10. Explain why Paul would be preferred over Apollos.
11. How can it be prideful and divisive to say, "I follow Christ?"

**1 Cor 3:1** Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly—as infants in Christ. **2**I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for solid food. In fact, you are still not ready, **3**for you are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and dissension among you, are you not worldly? Are you not walking in the way of man? **4**For when one of you says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

1. Why did Paul only give milk? Why were they "not yet ready?"
2. Think about Apollos' credentials that Luke listed above. What did Apollos add to Paul's initial teaching?
3. Is it a rebuke to say, "I gave you milk?"
4. Is it a rebuke to call the Corinthians "mere men?"
5. How is it that Christians should be more than "mere men?"
6. Look up Hebrews 5: **11**We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain, because you are dull of hearing.**12**Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to reteach you the basic principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food!**13**For everyone who lives on milk is still an infant, inexperienced in the message of righteousness.**14**But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained their senses to distinguish good from evil. Are the Hebrews being rebuked?
7. What happens when solid food is served?
8. Why are the mature no longer "mere men"?
9. How are you doing?

**1 Cor 3:5** What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, as the Lord has assigned to each his role. **6**I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. **7**So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. **8**He who plants and he who waters are one in purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. **9**For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

1. What do you see? Answer Paul's question in verse 5.
2. If Paul and Apollos are servants, whom are they serving?
3. If they are your servants, on whom is God's eye focused?
4. How have we now become more than "mere men?"
5. Who is greatest? The servant? Or the one being served? Why?
6. Look up 2 Chronicles 16:**9**[For the eyes of the LORD roam to and fro over all the earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are fully devoted to Him.](#) What does He see when He looks your way? What can you expect?

7. Look up Ephesians 4: [11](#)And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, [12](#)for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the [1e](#)edifying of the body of Christ, [13](#)till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... What is the goal of the ministry?
8. Is this milk? Or solid food?
9. What are you being raised up for? Do you know? Do you suspect?

[1 Cor 4:6](#)Brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us not to go beyond what is written. Then you will not take pride in one man over another. [7](#)For who makes you so superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

1. For whose sake was the gospel brought to Corinth?
2. Review [Acts 18:9-11](#) above. Why was Paul sent to Corinth in the first place? Was it an accident that Apollos was also sent?
3. What do you think: What was the benefit to Apollos' arrival in Corinth? What have you gained from his encounters there?
4. Seeing this, what is God's plan for you?

Here are the last two times Apollos is mentioned in the New Testament.

[1 Cor 16:10](#)If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, just as I am. [11](#)No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he can return to me, for I am expecting him along with the brothers. [12](#)Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was not at all inclined to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

1. In the context of the division Paul spoke of above, can you guess why Apollos is disinclined to go back to Corinth? Can you be sure or are you guessing? Would you want to go back to where your mere presence stirred up pride and division?
2. What does Paul's willingness to send him at this time teach you of maturity and ministry?
3. Did the Corinthians' reaction to Apollos stir up bad feelings in Paul?

[Titus 3:12](#)As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. [13](#)Do your best to equip Zenas the lawyer and Apollos, so that they will have everything they need.[14](#)And our people must also learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet the pressing needs of others, so that they will not be unfruitful.

1. What does this say of the relationship between Paul and Apollos?
2. What does this teach of maturity and priorities in ministry?



**The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Examine yourself. Where has contention prevented relationship?
3. Ask the Holy Spirit for a fresh and powerful infilling this week, and note what happens.
4. Pick a relative or friend whom you've tried to lead to the Lord, and back off. Pray only and allow the Lord to demonstrate His power. Note the results.

**Take the time to pray.**

**Scribe's Notes:**

1. **On *rhema* vs. *logos***—There are two words in Greek for “word,” ῥῆμα *rhema* and λόγος *logos*. Both mean “word,” yet they are not synonymous. The nuances of these words goes beyond the scope of these notes, and more can be found on the web. The simplest way to understand the difference is to recognize that *logos* is the word on the page. Whether or not you read it, the Word stands forever. Jesus is the *logos*, and he explains the *logos* by saying, “the seed is the word//*logos*.” If the Bible remains closed on the shelf, the seed remains lifeless and unplanted. The *rhema* is the expression of the Word that is the seed alive and given voice. Faith comes by hearing the *rhema*. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every *rhema* that comes from the Mouth of God. When the Word comes off the shelf and enters the heart, life transforming life is produced.
  2. **On Alexandria**—The city of Alexandria, Egypt, in the days of the Roman Empire, was the southern capital and a major center for education. Founded by Alexander the Great in the third century B.C., by the time Apollos was raised, it boasted largely of its schools, universities and especially of its library, unrivaled at least in legend by any library since. The city was a center for Jews, and the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the LXX, is said to have been written there. Mark the evangelist is credited with first bringing the gospel to Egypt, and it did not take long for Christianity to establish a powerful foothold there. In fact, the pride of the Christians of Alexandria, based on the level of education they received, fueled the divisions and contentions between cities in an effort to show “...who was greatest.” Readers of Luke’s narrative, upon hearing of Apollos of Alexandria, would make toward him the same associations we would make upon hearing that a pastor held a degree from Harvard or Yale, Oxford or the Sorbonne.
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**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5  
Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 3:1-4  
Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 3:5-9  
Thursday: Ephesians 4:10-16  
Friday: Acts 19:1-6  
Saturday: 1 Corinthians 4:6-7  
Sunday: Acts 18:9-11