Faulty Religious Assumptions

2 Kings 18:19-35 and Isaiah 3 give a record of the historical speech delivered by an Assyrian messenger named Rabshakeh. Judah was being seriously threatened by the Assyrians seven years after Israel had fallen to this ruthless foe. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, had sent his messengers to deliver a speech and letter to Hezekiah, king of Judah. The speech and letter was an attempt to intimidate Judah to surrender with no resistance. The Assyrians were more concerned at this time with the threat posed by Egypt than that of Judah. After studying the speech and letter it is apparent that Sennacherib and Rabshakeh made three faulty assumptions about Jehovah and His people. These errors were critical and would cost many their lives.

Rabshakeh begins his defiant speech against Jehovah and Judah by telling the people of Jerusalem that they cannot trust in Egypt or Jehovah for help. He would go on to say, "Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he will not be able to deliver you out of his (Sennacherib's) hand: neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Jehovah, saying, Jehovah will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria" (2 Kings 18:29-30). Rabshakeh gives three faulty reasons why Judah should not trust in their king nor Jehovah.

First, Rabshakeh mistakenly took Hezekiah's destruction of Judah's high places as an act against Jehovah. The Assyrian's point being that Judah cannot put their trust in the king or Jehovah because they are opposed to each other. What Rabshakeh did not understand was that Hezekiah destroyed the high places of idolatry and Jehovah was very pleased.

Secondly, Rabshakeh mistakenly lumped Judah and Israel together when he explained to the Jews that Assyria had the authority of Jehovah to destroy Judah (2 Kings 18:25). While it is true that Jehovah empowered and authorized the Assyrian's victory of Israel this was not true of Judah (see Isaiah 10:5).
Thirdly, Rabshakeh mistakenly placed Jehovah God on an equal plane with the gods of other nations. The Assyrians reasoned that if no other god has been able to stop their military conquest how would Jehovah stop them (2 Kings 18:33-35)?

You know the rest of the story. The one and only Living God killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night causing Sennacherib to flee back to his home land. As Sennacherib is worshipping in the house of Nisroch, his god, the king is murdered by his two sons. Truly Jehovah God is Lord alone!

I find it interesting that people today can approach religion with such reckless yet confident ignorance as did Rabshakeh the Assyrian. So many "religious" people today call evil good and good evil because they simply do not understand what they claim to understand.

The Baptist will confidently tell us that we do not have to be baptized to have our sins forgiven when the Bible clearly tells us otherwise (Acts 2:38).

The Catholic church refers to priests as "father" and the pope as the vicar of Christ upon this earth yet the Bible condemns such actions (Matthew 23:9).

Many so called churches of Christ do things in the name of religion yet with no Bible authority (i.e., support human institutions with church treasury, fellowship those in error, support marriages that violate Jehovah's standard, hold up the hands of false teachers in the name of friendship, and so on).

So many "religious" people, with no end of confidence, yet their approach to God is not based upon truth. The prophet Isaiah said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah:...." (Isaiah 1:18). Why is it that so many people refuse to base their religion on truth rather than a preconceived idea of what religion is?

Jesus explains the answer to this question at Matthew 13:10-15 (the Parable of the Sower). The Lord tells us that some will never have a knowledge of the truth because they really don't want it. Here are people that will ever learn but never come to the knowledge of truth (2 Timothy 3:7). Such a no care approach to Jehovah God and spirituality "IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW OF GOD, NEITHER INDEED CAN IT BE: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7-8). Such critical spiritual errors of men today will cause them to loose their eternal souls just as the Assyrians during the days of the good king Hezekiah.

John C. Robertson
Apollos

Introduction:

Acts 18:24-28 reveals twelve characteristics of a man named Apollos that had come to Ephesus during the year 52 AD. The apostle Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila had also come to Ephesus at this time. Paul was finishing his second tour of preaching. While Paul continued on to Judea he leaves Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus. These two Christians meet Apollos and "expound unto him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). This lesson shall examine the man Apollos and what it was about him that made him so magnetic to the brotherhood (see 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6).

I. Apollos was an Alexandrian by race (Northern Egypt above the Nile Delta).
II. Apollos was an "eloquent" man (educated in literature, arts, history, and antiquities).
III. Apollos was "mighty in the scriptures."
IV. Apollos "had been instructed in the ways of the Lord."
V. Apollos was "fervent in spirit."
VI. Apollos "spoke accurately the things concerning Jesus."
VII. Apollos "knew only the baptism of John."
VIII. Apollos showed no fear or favor of men.
IX. Apollos was obviously a humble man.
X. Apollos was well received of the brethren and others were encouraged to receive him.
XI. Apollos edified the brethren.
XII. Apollos "powerfully confuted the Jews publicly showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

Conclusion:

These twelve characteristics of Apollos give us great insight into his personality. Here was a man who understood the true value of the eternal soul (see Proverbs 4:7; 8:18-19; 16:16; 20:15; Matthew 13:44-45; 16:26). To become "mighty in the scriptures" takes effort and interest (2 Timothy 2:15). To be fervent in spirit takes a convicted heart (Matthew 5:6). Those who are interested and convicted are a delight to the Lord (see Proverbs 11:20).