

ACTS

of the Holy Spirit

Session #13 – 8:26 - 40

I. Philip Sent to the Ethiopian (8:26 – 27)

Verse 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.”

Interesting fact: “The angel of the Lord” is mentioned 56 times in 51 verses in the Hebrew scriptures.

This is a special angel – is considered a “theophany” of God himself or the incarnate presence of Christ himself. This could very well be the resurrected Christ himself.

Note: The angel sent Philip OUT OF a great work and INTO a desert! Even Christ had to go through the desert times!



Verse 27

So he started out,
and on his way

he met an Ethiopian (?)

(Aithiops = black (burnt face) – refers to the Kingdom of Cush – which is in fact Sudan – AKA “the upper Nile region”.)

eunuch, (eunuchos = keeper of the bed chambers)

an important official

in charge of all the treasury

of the Kandake (a title not a name)

(which means “queen of the Ethiopians” (Cushites)).

This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

Most feel he is a Jew convert. AKA a “proselyte”



II. Philip Explains Scriptures (8:28 – 35)

Verse 28

and on his way home

was sitting in his chariot

reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet.

Note: This would be extremely rare! First of all the scrolls are rare, secondly, carrying or reading them in the open territory would be unthinkable by a “orthodox Jew” unless you are a priest on a mission by God, and third, these scrolls would be very expensive to own! The Queen he serves has great wealth and he is likely bringing this to his Queen and wants to be able to explain it to her.

Of all the prophets! Isaiah is the MOST messianic!

Verse 29

The Spirit told Philip,
“Go to that chariot
and stay near it.”

Now the angel is no longer in charge, the Spirit gives direction. Philip is challenged with the “First Move”.

Evangelism Concept #1 – Let the Spirit lead your steps. The most important thing that any of us can do is pray for the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the opportunities we encounter every day to share our faith with others.

Evangelism Concept #2 – Be aware and ready to jump into what God is already doing in someone else's life. “Contagious Christian” by Bill Hybells calls this CP = Close Proximity.

Evangelism Concept #3 – Availability is more important than ability. As with Philip, God will give the ability when he needs it.

Verse 30

Then Philip

ran up to the chariot
and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet.
“Do you understand
what you are reading?” Philip asked.

This was a well educated man – reading Hebrew is not easy – He was not from Israel and therefore would not have been taught Hebrew from birth.

Evangelism Concept #4 – Sharing with seekers is more effective and fruitful. This is often called the “Receptivity Measure”.

Evangelism Concept #5 – Asking questions is much more effective than making statements when it comes to breaking the ice with a person. – Evangelism Explosion – “If you died tonight would you wake up in heaven or hell?”

Verse 31

“How can I,” he said,
“unless someone explains it to me?” (hodgeo = to show the way – to lead by the hand)
So he invited Philip
to come up
and sit with him.

Reading the Bible is great, but without understanding it is useless!

Evangelism Concept #6 – Accept invitations rather than forcing obligations.

Again, the wall of prejudice was overcome as Philip a Greek Jew was invited into the chariot of a Cushite Jewish convert.

Verse 32

This is the passage of Scripture
the eunuch was reading:
“He was led like a sheep
to the slaughter,
and as a lamb
before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.”

This was from Isaiah 53 – the Messianic Prophecy of Isaiah. This imagery in Isaiah explains the big picture of Christ as the “lamb of God” that fulfills the law of God and points to a “specific” prophecy that was fulfilled in the death of Christ. Philip has the table set for him to introduce Jesus into the equation.

Verse 33

In his humiliation
he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”

Here Isaiah speaks of the unfairness and unrighteousness of Christ's death, even in the fact that Jesus does not have children to carry on his family name.

What is interesting here – this is something that the eunuch can relate with – 1) He may feel humiliation for his position as a eunuch, and 2) obviously he will not have children either.

Verse 34

The eunuch asked Philip,
“Tell me, please,
who is the prophet talking about,
himself or someone else?”

Of all passages in Isaiah – this is the perfect place to start! Jews had three interpretations of the “suffering servant”:

- 1) the Nation of Israel
- 2) Isaiah himself
- 3) The coming Messiah

By explaining the differences between these points of view, you lead right into the truth between Christianity and Judaism.

Verse 35

Then Philip

began with that very passage

of Scripture

and told him the good news (euaggelizo)

about Jesus.

Evangelism Concept #7 – Use their present question to lead into their present problem - sin and need for a present solution – salvation. If we try to talk about something else first, we basically ignore the invitation to be involved and try to force them into OUR agenda first. **Contagious Christian** calls this CC = clear communication.

Evangelism Concept #8 – Jesus is always the point! We have to give people an opportunity to accept or reject Jesus Christ. Philip did not stay focused on Isaiah – he moved the conversation to Jesus!

III. Philip Baptizes Ethiopian (8:36 – 40)

Verse 36

As they traveled along the road,

they came to some water

and the eunuch said,

“Look, here is water.

What can stand in the way (kolyo = forbid or punish) of my being baptized?”

A clear indication of a serious commitment to Christ. To request to make a public profession of faith.

The eunuch is asking if the truth of Christ cuts across race and religion.

Verse 37

[Some manuscripts include here

Philip said,

“If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”]

Bible translation facts:

The **King James Version (KJV)** was completed in the year 1611. The KJV was based on the OT: Masoretic Text and the NT: Textus Receptus.

The Greek Language source material **“Novum Testamentum Graece” (NTG)** was first published in 1898. This text went back to earlier original texts that were unavailable to the KJV authors.

Therefore, this new basic text has evidence of verses missing or added after the original and can make a clearer distinction based on this evidence.

The **New International Version (NIV)** was first published in 1984 to take advantage of the latest research and is based on the NTG.

There are 17 verses like this in the NIV version that are omitted from the KJV.

Verse 38

And he gave orders

to stop the chariot.

Then both Philip

and the eunuch

went down into the water

and Philip baptized him.

Evangelism Concept #9 – Strike while the fire is hot! Don’t delay a commitment to Christ to another day.



Verse 39

When they came up

out of the water,

the Spirit of the Lord

suddenly took Philip away, (harpazo = to take by force)

and the eunuch did not see him again,

but went on his way rejoicing.

To be “taken away” is the same word for rapture in I Thess. 4:17

Verse 40

Philip, however,

appeared at Azotus

and traveled about,

preaching the gospel

(euaggelizo)

in all the towns

until he reached Caesarea.



Caesarea was a Gentile city! This is the beginning of the movement that Christ predicted in Acts 1:8 – “to the ends of the earth”.