

Acts Chapter 8 Continued

Acts 8:25 "And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans."

In the last lesson, we had seen Peter and John come to Samaria to help Philip.

They had laid hands on the believers and they had received the Holy Ghost.

Now that the church is established here in the city of Samaria, we see that Peter and John go back to Jerusalem.

It appears from the Scripture above, that on the way back they preached in many of the Samaritan cities.

Acts 8:26 "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."

"Gaza":

One of 5 chief cities of the Philistines.

The original city was destroyed in the first century B.C. and a new city was built near the coast.

It is so strange today, if you tell someone the Lord has spoken to you, they look at you as if there is something wrong with you.

All through the Bible the Lord spoke to people.

He spoke to Noah to build an ark, He spoke to Jonah to go to Nineveh, He spoke to Moses to deliver His people, He spoke to Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees, and many more too numerous to mention.

The problem today is, the Lord still speaks, but few are listening.

We see here, that Philip is told to go toward the south.

He was not told why, just to go.

Acts 8:27 "And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,"

"Ethiopia":

In those days, Ethiopia was a large kingdom located south of Egypt.

“Eunuch”:

This can refer to one who had been emasculated or generally, to a government official.

It is likely he was both since Luke refers to him as a eunuch and as one who held a position of authority in the queen’s court, that of treasurer, much like a minister of finance or secretary of the treasury.

As a physical eunuch, he would have been denied access to the temple (Deut. 23:1), and the opportunity to become a full proselyte to Judaism.

“Candace”:

Probably not a name, but an official title (like Pharaoh or Caesar) given to the queen mothers in that land.

Acts 8:28 "Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Isaiah the prophet."

“Read Isaiah”:

This is the same as Elijah.

He knew the importance of seeking God through the Scripture (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39, 46; Rom. 10:12-15).

This man was interested in knowing the truth about God.

While no one was looking out in the desert, he was studying God's Word in Isaiah.

Acts 8:29 "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."

Notice in this that God is interested in individuals.

God has sent Philip a long way to just this one man.

My own opinion is that God is doing this type of work today.

The people who are truly interested in studying God's Word and knowing God's will today are just a few.

God is interested in individuals who truly love Him and want to follow Him.

That is the case in the verse above.

God has sent Philip to save this one man.

Notice that in this verse, the Holy Spirit told Philip to go to this chariot.

Acts 8:30 "And Philip ran thither to [him], and heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?"

Notice, the eunuch was trying to understand.

He was still reading, hoping the meaning would be opened to him.

This man is not only one seeking God, but a truthful man as well.

He is not puffed up with pride, but admits he does not understand.

Acts 8:31 "And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."

Help is here!

This help was sent from God to one who earnestly desired to know the truth.

Verses 32-33

“Scripture ... he read was this”:

See Isaiah 53:7-8.

Acts 8:32 "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:"

We know that the leaders in the temple in Jerusalem did not even know themselves what this meant, so how could they teach someone else?

You see, this was a prophetic Scripture about how Jesus (the Lamb of God), would be brought before the council, and how He would stand in silence as they accused Him.

Acts 8:33 "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth."

It tells of His humiliation of the cross, and then being taken up from the earth.

Acts 8:34 "And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?"

“Of whom speaketh the prophet this?”:

His confusion was understandable.

Even the Jewish religious experts were divided on the meaning of this passage.

Some believed the slaughtered sheep represented Israel, others thought Isaiah was referring to himself, and others thought the Messiah was Isaiah’s subject.

This eunuch had no one to turn to for the truth.

God has sent him help in Philip.

Notice one more time; that this valuable disciple of God was sent to the desert to minister to only one man.

Acts 8:35 "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

There are several important things to notice in this.

One thing is that Philip took up the man's Bible and taught from Isaiah.

This is a New Testament man preaching from the Old Testament.

Another very important thing to note is that Philip showed him Jesus in the Old Testament.

Jesus is from Genesis to Revelation.

The whole Bible revolves around Jesus.

Notice the most important thing: Philip, without hesitation, preached to this total stranger.

Be instant in and out of season, where the Word of God is concerned.

Acts 8:36 "And as they went on [their] way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, [here is] water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

This eunuch knew the Scriptures (written Word), and readily accepted the spoken Word.

We see here, that it is not necessary to be baptized in any particular place, or even on any day.

Notice in the next verse, how Philip answers him.

It is great to be baptized, but we must have something happen in our heart first.

Acts 8:37 "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

This verse is not found in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts.

(Acts 16:32-34 and 18:8), demonstrate that faith precedes baptism.

You see, new birth occurs first in our heart.

We must truly love God more than we love the world around us.

We must destroy the desires of the flesh and live to the Spirit.

In Romans, we read the qualifications for being saved:

Romans 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

We see the eunuch has done just this, and now he is ready to be baptized.

Acts 8:38 "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

It's here that they went into the water.

This baptism was to the death of self and burial (water), and being raised to new life in Christ.

Now this eunuch is a brand-new spirit man in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He will no longer live for the flesh, but will walk in the spirit.

Acts 8:39 "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

"Caught away Philip":

Elijah (1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16), and Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:12, 14; 8:3), were also snatched away in a miraculous fashion.

This was a powerful confirmation to the caravan that Philip was God's representative.

Mission accomplished.

Philip was no longer needed here, so the Spirit carried him away.

He did not have to walk back.

Acts 8:40 "But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."

“Azotus”:

The first-century name for the ancient Philistine city of Ashdod, located 20 miles north of Gaza.

“Caesarea”:

Where Philip and his family probably lived (21:9; see note on 9:30).

Philip appears to have established his ministry in “Caesarea,” since about 20 years later he and his family are still there (21:8).

This was a miraculous transportation of Philip.

God's power is unlimited.

How Philip got to Azotus, I will allow you to guess.

We see here, that Philip knew no fear, he preached everywhere he went.

I believe the transportation Philip used to get from the desert to Azotus was similar to the trip Elijah took in the whirlwind, and the trip the Lord Jesus took to heaven on a cloud.

All I can say is, it was a miracle ride.

Acts Chapter 8 Continued Questions

1. In verse 25, we find that they preached in many ____ of the _____.
2. After what was completed in the city of Samaria, Peter and John went to Jerusalem?
3. Where did the angel of the Lord tell Philip to go?
4. Name several specific people God spoke to in the Bible.
5. Do you believe God speaks to people now?
6. What is wrong with our not receiving more from God?
7. When God spoke to Philip, what did Philip do (in one word)?

8. The eunuch, Philip was sent to, was from what country?
9. What does eunuch mean?
10. Who did he work for?
11. What book of the Old Testament was he reading?
12. In verse 29, who told Philip what to do?
13. What question did Philip ask the eunuch?
14. In verse 31, what good character trait do we see in the eunuch?
15. What was he reading about in Isaiah?
16. Why had not the temple rulers told him what this Scripture meant?
17. What question did the eunuch ask Philip in verse 34?
18. What did Philip preach to him?
19. Which books in the Bible are about Jesus?
20. What did the eunuch ask Philip in verse 36?
21. What must we do before we are baptized?
22. What type of baptism did Philip do to the eunuch?
23. What happened to Philip immediately after the baptism?
24. Where did Philip preach after he was found at Azotus?