**The Ethiopian Eunuch**

**Introduction:**

So far in our study of the Book of Acts we have seen the conversions of large numbers of people: 3,000 on Pentecost (Acts 2), 2,000 in Solomon’s Portico (Acts 3-4), and multitudes in Samaria (Acts 8). Now, in our text, we see Philip, who had preached to the multitudes in Samaria, given a divine directive to leave Samaria and go toward Gaza. Let’s see what happens.

**Text:** Acts 8:26-40

**Body:**

1. **Philip Meets A Eunuch** (Acts 8:26-29) “Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, ‘Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’ ” NKJV

* An angel directs him to take the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza. This particular road was suitable for wheeled vehicles. The route was probably from Bethlehem to Hebron and then Gaza. This area is where John the Baptist grew up. It was desert with few inhabitants.
* He meets a eunuch from Ethiopia, the ancient Nubian Kingdom south of Aswan on the Nile down to Khartoum. He was a high-ranking official in charge of the treasury of Candace, the title for the queen of the Ethiopians. He had traveled nearly a thousand miles to worship in Jerusalem. Being a eunuch, he would not have been allowed to enter the Temple. (Deuteronomy 23:1) “He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the Lord.” NKJV This trip shows his dedication.
* The “Chariot” was possible a covered, four-wheeled one probably with a driver. The eunuch was reading from the scroll of Isaiah which was a very expensive item. This was especially significant due to the words of Isaiah 56:3-5. “Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the Lord Speak, saying, ‘The Lord has utterly separated me from His people’; Nor let the eunuch say, ‘Here I am, a dry tree.’ For thus says the Lord: ‘To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.” NKJV
* An angel tells Philip to join the chariot. Note that an angel sends a human messenger, no angelic visions or direct revelations.

1. **Philip Preaches to the Eunuch** (Acts 8:30-35) “So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: ‘He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.’ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, ‘I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.” NKJV

* The Holy Spirit directs Philip to approach the eunuch. Most people read aloud in those days so he was aware the eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53. Notice that Philip asks the eunuch if he understood the meaning of the passage, not what his interpretation of it was!
* The eunuch shows humility in his reply to Philip. The particular scripture he was reading was Isaiah 53:7-8. “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.” NKJV This is part of a broader section: Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12. It is a section concerning the Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God, who was to be sacrificed as a guilt offering.
* In particular verses 7-8 describe this servant as one who would not open His mouth. Jesus accepted His death as God’s plan. Note Acts 2:23 “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;”and Matthew 26:59-63. “Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’ And the high priest arose and said to Him, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ ” NKJV He would be like a lamb led to the slaughter [innocent and submissive]. (John 1:29) “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ ” (I Peter 2:22-25) “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” NKJV The servant would be unjustly condemned and would die for the sins of the people. (I Corinthians 15:1-3) “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,” NKJV At this point, Philip tells him the good news of Jesus.

1. **Philip Baptizes the Eunuch**

(Acts 8:36-40) “Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.” NKJV

* After Philip preaches Jesus to him, the eunuch wants to be baptized. It follows then that preaching Christ must include baptism. Baptism is the expected response when one believes in Jesus as the Son of God.
* The eunuch confesses his faith in Jesus. (Romans 10:9-10) “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” NKJV
* Note that the eunuch did not want to wait to be baptized. There was an immediate need! The reason was because baptism was necessary for salvation. (Acts 2:38) “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 22:16) “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” NKJV

It would have been dangerous to wait.

We see from this account that proper baptism is a burial in water, an immersion. (Romans 6:3-4) “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Colossians 2:12) “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” NKJV Sprinkling or pouring are neither one approved by God.

* We also see that baptism is not a sign that one is saved, but rather is necessary to be saved.

**Conclusion:**

As Christians, we can learn several lessons from Philip:

1. Be ready at all times.
2. Be watching and listening to the people around you.
3. Be courageous.

Bobby Stafford September 27, 2015 [Evening] Acts: Lesson 22 Acts 8:26-40