



# Acts 8:26-40

He who is sought  
becomes one who seeks

# God orchestrates a gospel opportunity (8:26-31)

*<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. <sup>27</sup> And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup> and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.*

- Luke picks up the story of God's continued use of Philip
  - Philip is directed by an angel to go to a desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza
  - Philip obeys and finds an Ethiopian official of the queen of the Ethiopians
  - He was also made a eunuch to protect the king's queen and harem from sexual compromise
- This Ethiopian man was a convert to Judaism
  - With the trust of the court of Ethiopia, he was permitted to go Jerusalem to worship, which is about a 5-month journey
  - As a eunuch, he was not permitted beyond the Court of the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 23:1)
  - He is returning to Ethiopia at the time of his encounter with Philip
  - Seated in his chariot, he is reading from an Old Testament scroll
  - Luke reports that he was reading from the book of Isaiah

# God orchestrates a gospel opportunity (8:26-31)

*29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.*

- Philip runs up to the chariot and hears the Ethiopian reading from Isaiah
- Philip inquires if the Ethiopian is comprehending what he reads
- The Ethiopian acknowledges that he needs help and invites Philip to join him in the chariot
- Philip's obedience is exemplary
- The Ethiopian eunuch is seeking because he is being sought
  - John 6:44
  - John 6:65

# Jesus is the answer to the Scriptural clarification requested (8:32-35)

*<sup>32</sup> Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. <sup>33</sup> In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." <sup>34</sup> And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" <sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.*

- The passage read by the Ethiopian is Isaiah 53:7b-8a
- The Ethiopian is puzzled by this passage
- The passage is Messianic and fails to make sense outside of its fulfillment by the coming of Jesus as the suffering Savior
  - Though the arrest and condemnation of Jesus is a travesty of justice, Jesus does not open his mouth to escape the outcome
  - Why? Because Jesus is committed to fulfilling Scripture and offering Himself as an atoning sacrifice to satisfy God's justice for those He came to save
- Philip doesn't just refer to Isaiah 53, but uses many Old Testament passages to show how they point to the redemption God provides through the gift of His Son
- God gloriously uses the injustice of man to accomplish saving justice
  - This mess is in fact God's mercy
  - This is good news!

# Conversion and confession are displayed in baptism (8:36-40)

*<sup>36</sup> And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" <sup>38</sup> And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup> And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.*

- Philip's sharing of gospel truth describes God's mercy and presence through the gift of His Son, Jesus the Christ
- Philip must have shared the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist to fulfill all righteousness and display God's blessing and presence
- Philip likely shared how those who trust this mysterious, but glorious saving work of Jesus, identify with the saving power and presence of the Lord through baptism
- Regeneration for the Ethiopian occurs, and the truths of Scripture fulfilled in Jesus press him to trust Jesus as His living Lord and Savior
- Seeing a body of water off the roadway, he longs to declare his trust in the Lord, welcoming the power and presence of Jesus to empower his obedience throughout life

# Conversion and confession are displayed in baptism (8:36-40)

- The report that *“they both went down into the water,”* and that *“they came up out of the water,”* indicates baptism by immersion (βαπτίζω (*baptizō*) – dip, immerse)
- The Spirit of the Lord carries Philip away to Azotus
- Philip continues his gospel ministry northward until he settles in Caesarea
- God sending Philip to the Ethiopian is a display of the Lord’s gospel grace and mercy
- The Ethiopian will return home with a new heart and a new passion for gospel truth
  - Isaiah 56:3–5
- The gospel is moving out to the end of the earth, fulfilling promises
  - Psalm 67
  - Acts 1:8

# Questions to Consider

- How does God's orchestration of the salvation of the Ethiopian encourage your heart?
- In what ways does Philip's obedience inspire you?
- Why is it important for you to know the Old Testament?
- How is the presence and power of Jesus in baptism an ongoing blessing in the believer's life?



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