

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch Acts 8:26-40

"26 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. 27 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, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet."

Ice Breakers: Don't forget to start this session with an ice breaker from the back of last week's guide OR online at www.fbcportland.org/icebreakers.

*Have someone in your group read **Acts 8:26-28***

Who was the "eunuch" [Acts 8:27]?

- *In order to protect the king's harem in ancient royal courts, as well as to deter assassination of the king aimed at eventually benefiting the children of the assassin, men who served the king inside the palace were required to be emasculated. Over time, "eunuch" became synonymous with a high government official - the "Treasury" [Acts 8:27] Secretary or the Finance Minister in this case - so it is unclear if this political eunuch was also one **physiologically**.*
- *But given that "he had come to Jerusalem to worship" [Acts 8:27] and the Law stated, "He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD" [Deuteronomy 23:1], it is likely that this gentleman was still happily intact.*

What do you notice about this Ethiopian that makes you think he was a "believer"?

- **He was in the right place - Jerusalem**
 - **Was he a Jew?**
 - *No, he was a gentile, so either a "God-fearer," or more likely a "proselyte," who is able to participate in the Passover and other Jewish feasts (see proselyte).*
- **He had the right reasons - worshipping**
- **He had the right information - Scroll of Isaiah the prophet**

Are these three things - right place, right reasons & right info - enough to show that a person is a believer?

- *No - look at the story of Simon last week*
- **So, what is different about the Ethiopian?**

In sending Philip an angel, what does this tell you:

- About God?
- About Philip?
- About the Ethiopian?

What would you think if you were forced from your home [like Philip was in Jerusalem], then asked to leave a successful ministry [like Philip was asked to leave in Samaria] and go to a desert place?

- And, oh yeah, what time was he asked to go to a desert place? [noon - during the hottest part of the day!]

What was Philip's response? [He rose and went.]

Have your group look up the definition to **"God's Providence"** on their phone.

- [**Providence** is defined in our English dictionaries as the act of seeing and providing or preparing for the future, and Biblically refers to God's foresight and power to watch over and protect and provide for His creatures]
- [God's providence is God's caring provision for his people as he guides them in their journey of faith through life, accomplishing his purpose in them.]
- ["Seeing to" something is acting on behalf of something. It is "providing." Thus, providence is the act of God's "seeing to" the universe.]
- [The providence of God refers to God making all the events of the physical and moral universe fulfill His original design.]

Would you classify this account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch as God using His providence? [Yes - undoubtedly.]

- Philip is guided to the Ethiopian - and God was obviously working on the Ethiopian's heart.
- God is providing the Ethiopian with understanding of Isaiah which led to His conversion [proven by his baptism and rejoicing].
- And by sending an angel - a literal messenger of God - God made all the events of the physical and moral universe possible.

Discuss the providence of God concerning our text today:

- Is God's providence easy to comprehend? Does the providence of God seem confusing? why?
- Does the providence of God **extend into every area of life** OR *does God really care who wins the Super Bowl or a UT football game?*
 - Does God care what you wear on a particular day or what you eat? How extensive is the providence of God?

[The extent of the providence of God is complete. There is no detail of our lives that God does not take a vital interest which is why the command in **1 Corinthians 10:31** tells us **whatever we do - do it for the glory of God**. Jesus taught that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without the knowledge and will of the Father and that the hairs of our head are numbered. [Matthew 10:29-30.]]

*Have someone in your group read **Acts 8:29-31***

Who told Philip to catch up to the eunuch?

- *The Holy Spirit*

How was Philip able to hear what the eunuch was reading?

- *In those days, all reading was customarily done aloud, even when alone.*

What do you think made Philip ask the man, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

- How would you respond if someone ran up to you and asked that as you were reading the Bible?
- Would you be offended? humbled?

*Have someone in your group read **Acts 8:32-35***

Look carefully at **verses 31-35**:

- How would you react if someone asked you to guide them in understanding the Scripture?
- How would you share the good news of Jesus using **Isaiah 53:7-8**?

The Lord is the one who leads in witnessing.

- Do we see that in the passage?
- Share some experiences of the Lord leading you to speak of Jesus?
- What is God’s role and what is our role in outreach?

*Have someone in your group read **Acts 8:36-40***

Why is baptism by immersion an appropriate action for the new believer?

[public profession of faith that the person went from death to life. It is an outward profession of an inward change.]

Does baptism save the believer? *[No - Only Jesus Christ saves and is the only possible path to restoration to the Father]*

What do you think was the difference between Simon’s baptism in 8:13 and the Ethiopian’s baptism in 8:36 & 38? *[Does vs. 39 help in answering that question?]*

What does vs. 40 tells us about the work of a disciple of Jesus Christ?

- What does it tell us about Philip? *[especially after leaving Jerusalem because of persecution; a successful ministry in Samaria and now a successful “mission trip” to a desolate place!]*

Closeout your group time in prayer