

ACTS 8:26-40

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

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.

³¹ “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

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.

³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

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 of my being baptized?” ^[37] ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Acts 8:37

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.’”

If you could travel overseas, to which country would you like to go?

What do we learn about the Ethiopian eunuch, and what was he doing when Philip met him (verses 27-28)? Use commentary or study Bible notes if helpful.

How does the Holy Spirit guide Philip, and what does he do? How did Philip explain the good news about Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch?

The eunuch was reading Isaiah but needed guidance to understand it. How does this highlight the importance of discipleship and having someone to teach us in our faith?

Why do you think the Holy Spirit led Philip to this specific man? What does this say about God's concern for an individual?

Philip was prepared to share the gospel when the opportunity arose. How can you better equip yourself to explain your faith when the moment comes (see 1 Peter 3:15)?

DAILY READINGS

1. ISAIAH 53:1-12
2. LUKE 15:1-10
3. LUKE 15:11-32
4. JOHN 4:1-26
5. ROMANS 6:1-14
6. 1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23
7. ACTS 8:26-40



ACTS 9

SAUL'S "CONVERSION"

Saul of Tarsus was a man of deep conviction, confidence, passion, and zeal. He was raised in a commercial city visited by travelers, trained in the best schools in Jerusalem, and honored among his peers as a rising leader. Indeed, the future appeared bright for young Saul.

In his early 20's, Saul accepted a commission to eradicate an upstart movement which boldly claimed that the awaited Messiah of Israel had not only come but also had been violently killed by the Romans. Initially those making this claim were largely centered in Jerusalem but steadily moved outward to surrounding areas. They were committed to publicly declaring that this Messiah had not only been crucified but had risen to new life and ascended to the right hand of Yahweh in Heaven.

For Saul, the belief that the promised Messiah had come in the person of Jesus and that He arose from the dead was blasphemous. He recognized that Israel remained under foreign oppression precisely because of their failure to honor God. This upstart group with their "misguided message" could not be allowed to bring further dishonor to God. As he states in his own testimony in Acts 26:9-10a "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did..."

God's people ignored Him, resulting in conquest by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and finally Romans. If Israel was to experience true freedom again as a

nation, they would need to demonstrate wholehearted zeal and uncompromising faithfulness to God as revealed in the Old Testament.

As Saul traveled north to Damascus, Syria, perhaps all of these things were on his mind. On that dusty road, the unthinkable occurred: “Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’” (Acts 9:3b-4).

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” (Acts 9:5b). Could it be? Could this Jesus he had been persecuting be the Messiah? Could everything Saul thought he knew about this upstart movement be wrong?

Now was not the time for such questions, however. As suddenly as Saul’s sight had been awakened by the brilliant appearance of Jesus, he was left in darkness without sight. This powerful man on the rise now had to be led by the men traveling with him to Damascus. Although he had reached the intended destination, the journey took him to an unexpected calling and purpose.

Saul had been chosen by God to be an instrument to carry the good news of Jesus to the nations and to suffer much for this cause. In the home of Ananias, a disciple of Jesus, Saul received a confirmation of this commission. “Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized...” (Acts 9:17b-18).

Perhaps no one was more qualified for this important mission than this man, Saul of Tarsus. Not only was he highly educated, he also worked with his hands as a tent maker and could relate to all kinds of people. He was a Roman citizen with the ability and opportunity to connect with travelers from all over the Empire. He would need all these skills and attributes for his unique calling.

Saul’s training in the Hebrew Scriptures enabled him to explain how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah to both Jews and Gentiles. As Saul’s eyes were opened, so too would he open the eyes of Israel and the nations to see that Jesus is the risen Messiah, the true light of the world.



