

The Book of Acts
Chapter 8 – Part 2

Acts 8:30-31

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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.

I. Review of Acts 1-8

A. Acts 1

1. Jesus made His final appearance and told the disciples to go to Jerusalem and pray until they were filled with the Holy Ghost. He commissioned them to preach from Jerusalem, to Samaria, and the rest of the world.
2. Jesus was taken up into heaven into the clouds, and 2 angels told them Jesus would return in a similar manner as He was taken away.
3. 120 went to a prayer meeting. There the apostles selected a man named Matthias to replace Judas.

B. Acts 2

1. On the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost fell on the 120 who gathered for prayer. They were all filled and spoke in other tongues.
2. A crowd of many nationalities gathered in the streets below after hearing of this outpouring, some thinking they were all drunk.
3. Peter greeted the crowd and said what had happened was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh, young and old.
4. He reminded the crowd of recent events. Jesus, who had done miracles and wonders and signs among them, was arrested Him and crucified, but God raised Him from the dead.
5. After preaching, many in the crowd were convicted of their sins and wanted to know what they should do.
6. Peter told them to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus and they would receive the Holy Ghost.
7. 3,000 were baptized, and continued with the apostles who taught them and fellowshiped with them daily, and more were added daily.

C. Acts 3

1. Peter and John went to the temple to pray and found a lame man begging by the gate. Instead of giving him money, Peter took his hand and raised him up in Jesus' name.
2. The lame man was instantly healed and he ran through the temple grounds praising God.
3. A multitude gathered at this sight and Peter preached Jesus to them. He reminded them of recent events, how they had crucified Jesus, the Son of God, but God raised Him from the dead.
4. He told them to repent and be filled with the presence of the Lord—Jesus would come in them.

D. Acts 4

1. Following that notable miracle, 5,000 new believers were added to the church, causing temple leaders to arrest Peter and John, to interrogate them about what power or authority they had done this.
2. It was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified but God raised. Further, Peter said there was salvation in no other name under heaven but Jesus.
3. Since the healed man was standing before them, they could not deny the miracle, so they just threatened them to stop preaching in Jesus' name.
4. Peter and John asked them, "Should we obey you or God?"
5. They threatened them and let them go.
6. After their release, they returned to the church and had a powerful, house-shaking, Holy Ghost outpouring prayer meeting.
7. We learn that church members were sharing their wealth to help meet the needs of all.
8. We learn of a man named Barnabas who sold some land and brought the money to the apostles.

E. Acts 5

1. We learn of Ananias and Sapphira who lied to Peter and the Holy Ghost about a donation they made, and died for their deception.
2. The fear of the Lord came over folks and multitudes came into the church at that time, and people came from all around were miraculously healed and delivered from devils.
3. The word of the multitudes coming into the church stirred up the high priest again who had the apostles arrested, but an angel opened the prison doors and told the apostles to go preach in the temple.
4. The apostles were re-arrested and charged again to stop preaching Jesus.
5. Peter answered, they had crucified Jesus but God had raised Him up as Savior and was now giving forgiveness of sins and pouring out the Holy Ghost, and they had to obey God rather than men.
6. The apostles were beaten and threatened to stop preaching Jesus, but they went back to the temple and went house-to-house teaching and preaching Jesus.

F. Acts 6

1. The growing church was serving meals to its many members, but a crisis developed when some of the foreign-born Jews who came into the church were apparently being neglected at meal time.
2. The apostles appointed 7 wise, Holy Ghost-filled helpers, which were eventually called deacons in later years, to help with food distribution.
3. One of them, Stephen, went from serving tables to preaching in the streets. Some of the foreign-born Jews got into an argument and debate with Stephen about the temple, accusing Stephen of saying that Jesus was coming to destroy the temple and change their customs.
4. These men had Stephen arrested and called before the Jewish council.

G. Acts 7

1. Defense of Stephen before the Jewish council. Rather than defending himself, he recounted the history of the Jews from the story of Abraham all the way to the Messiah Jesus.
2. So he taught the history of the Jews to the teachers of Jewish history, and preached Jesus to the authorities who had arrested and convicted Jesus with the death penalty.

3. Saul of Tarsus, a radical defender of the Jewish faith, one we would call today a right-wing militia leader, had Stephen stoned to death.
- H. Chapter 8:1-25
1. A great persecution of the church at the hands of Saul of Tarsus followed Stephen's death. This brutal persecution led to arrests of Christians from house to house. This caused a mass fleeing of Christians from Jerusalem, leaving only the apostles behind.
 2. But wherever the saints scattered, they took the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus with them.
 3. The first half of Acts 8 covers the story of Philip going to Samaria and preaching there. Jesus had previously opened the door of revival in Samaria, and Philip built on Jesus' ministry by preaching Christ there.
 4. He carried the same message the apostles had preached in Jerusalem about Jesus' death and resurrection, he cast out devils, worked miracles, and baptized the believers in Jesus' name.
 5. Even a local sorcerer named Simon was among those who believed and was baptized.
 6. Peter and John got word of this move of God and journeyed from Jerusalem to Samaria and laid hands on these new converts and they were filled with the Holy Ghost.
 7. We read that Simon the sorcerer asked to purchase the power to lay hands on folks and fill them with the Holy Ghost.
- II. Summary
1. There is a common theme that arises over and over in Acts. That is the revival sandwich: **revival is followed by persecution that is followed by revival.**
 2. In Acts 2 & 3, thousands were saved.
 3. Acts 4, Peter and John were arrested and threatened to stop preaching Jesus, and the chapter ended with a Holy Ghost shaking prayer meeting and great fellowship and sacrificial giving.
 4. In chapter 5, an internal kind of persecution arose when a couple of church members tried to deceive the church and lie to the Holy Ghost. They were died, but that was followed by a multiplication of new believers.
 5. But in that same chapter, Peter and the apostles were arrested again for continuing to preach, God miraculously delivered them from prison and they went back to preaching, they got re-arrested, threatened again, and were beaten.
 6. Chapter 6 started off telling of the church getting multiplied again, which caused some contention among members, the apostles organized things, and revival expanded the church further.
 7. Then Chapter 7 tells of Stephen being arrested, tried, and stoned.
 8. Chapter 8 begins with an even worse persecution that sent the church out preaching the gospel to other places and revival spread!
 9. God takes what the enemy meant for evil and turns it for good!
- III. Conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Verses 26-40)
- A. Following the Spirit
1. Philip saw revival in Samaria, but was now led by the Spirit into the desert to minister to one Ethiopian man.

2. He led a great work in Samaria, but he was sincere and wholly dedicated to the service of the Lord, and by the Spirit's leading, left that work for a different mission.

3. **[8] Why did God send Philip from Samaria to the desert?**

4. **[9] At what strategic time and place did he meet the Ethiopian eunuch?**

5. **[10] What is revealed of the position and the religion of the Ethiopian?**

6. **[map of Samaria to Gaza to Caesarea] [Map of Jerusalem to Gaza]**

7. The Lord did not tell Philip why he was to go into the desert, but simply instructed him to follow the road leading south, which would intersect the road which led from Jerusalem to Gaza.

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.

8. Gaza was nearly forty miles southwest from Jerusalem, and the road from Jerusalem to Gaza was the main trade route leading to Africa, down through Egypt and then Ethiopia.

B. Meeting a hungry Ethiopian

1. *Acts 8:27-28*

*27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an 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,***

*28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot **read Esaias the prophet.***

2. While Philip journeyed on foot southward from Samaria, the Ethiopian eunuch journeyed in his chariot from Jerusalem toward Gaza. God had arranged the perfect timing of Philip's departure so his path would intersect with this man.

3. The term eunuch, or chamberlain¹, refers to a man who had been castrated, and would have administrative positions among royalty, especially dealing with women.

4. This eunuch was a high official who worked under Candace queen of the Ethiopians of northeast Africa, in a role like the Secretary of the Treasury.

5. He evidently was a convert to Judaism because he had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was reading the Jewish scriptures, and had a scroll of Isaiah.

Acts 8:29-30

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

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

6. But God saw his honest and hungry heart, and sent Philip to show him the way of salvation in Jesus.

7. **[11] How is personal evangelism shown to be an important part of the Lord's work?**

8. **[12] How does this incident show the importance of prompt obedience to God's call?**

¹ Eunuch, castrated human male. From remote antiquity, eunuchs were employed in the Middle East and in China in two main functions: as **guards and servants in harems or other women's quarters**, and as chamberlains to kings. Eunuchs were considered the most suitable guards for the many wives or concubines a ruler might have in his palace, and the eunuchs' confidential position in the harems of princes frequently enabled them to exercise an important influence over their royal masters and even to raise themselves to stations of great trust and power. Some rose to become bodyguards, confidential advisers, and even ministers, generals, and admirals. Most eunuchs underwent castration as a condition of their employment, though others were castrated as punishment or after they had been sold by poor parents. From <https://www.britannica.com/topic/eunuch> accessed 3/3/2021.

9. **[13] How did the Lord perfectly arrange and time this meeting of Philip with the Ethiopian?**

C. The timing was right

1. God sends evangelists to preach to crowds or individuals. It is noteworthy how God called Philip away from the remarkable revival meeting in Samaria to preach the gospel of salvation to one Ethiopian eunuch.

2. Philip arrived at just the right time as God had perfectly set the stage for Philip to lead the Ethiopian into salvation in Jesus Christ, who was at that moment reading Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering of Christ in Isaiah 53.

3. The Lord had prepared the eunuch to receive Philip's message and had supplied the very Scripture text for him to use.

4. As Philip approached the chariot, he heard the eunuch reading the Scripture, and asked if he understood what he was reading.

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

5. This very question was uppermost in the mind of the Ethiopian at this time, and he invited Philip to get into the chariot and explain this Scripture to him

6. He was anxious to learn of whom the prophet had spoken these things. He was reading Isaiah 53:7.

Acts 8:31-34

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.

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:

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

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

7. The Ethiopian's hunger for the Word opened the way for Philip to use the very text that had puzzled him to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

D. Preaching Jesus

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

2. He showed how Jesus had perfectly fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, and explained to him the full message of Pentecost.

3. Remember, Philip had been appointed a deacon in the Jerusalem church because he was full of the Holy Ghost.

4. Remember also that when Philip took the gospel message to Samaria, he preached the same gospel message that had received, which was the Acts 2:38 message.

5. That is why the Samaritans were baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost.

6. So now, when Philip preached Jesus, he would have begun with Isaiah 53 to preach—just like Peter and John had done so many times—the death and resurrection of Jesus as Savior and Forgiver of sins, and the importance of baptism in the name of the Lord, and how God would fill him with the Holy Ghost.

7. The Ethiopian had an open mind and a hungry heart, and he readily received Philip's message, asking to be baptized. Notice again God's perfect timing of when they reached "a certain water."

Acts 8:36-37

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?

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.

E. Obeying the gospel

1. When a person believes the gospel, they are 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.

2. **[14] What was the result of Philip's ministry to the Ethiopian?**

3. **[15] What happened to Philip after the Ethiopian was baptized?**

4. God put His blessing on their obedient acts of faith:

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.

5. Adam Clarke's commentary on this verse shows the translation from the Codex Alexandrinus of this verse that reads: *The Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch: But the angel of the Lord snatched away Philip.*

6. That is likely what happened to the eunuch because he went on his way rejoicing.

F. Closing: Moved by the Spirit

1. The power of God was so strong on Philip that he was caught away, so that the eunuch did not see him again. Philip was caught away by the Spirit of God and was found at Azotus:

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

2. He found himself in Azotus, which was a city on the coast of the Mediterranean, then followed the coastline northward, preaching in every city, until he came to Caesarea.

3. **[maps: Samaria to Gaza to Caesarea, Jerusalem to Gaza; Samaria Azotus to Caesarea]**

4. Moving with the Spirit is essential. Years later, Philip was living in Caesarea when Paul and his party came through on Paul's final trip to Jerusalem.

5. He had waited tables in Jerusalem, preached revival in Samaria, preached the gospel to a foreign official.

6. According to tradition, the Eunuch took the gospel message to Ethiopia as the first missionary to Africa.

7. Perhaps that is why the Lord sent Philip to show him the way of salvation in Jesus Christ.

8. However, I believe Philip's greatest accomplishment was that he raised four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8-9). How important it is to be Spirit led!