

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for January 13, 2013

The Ministry of Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch
Acts 8:25-40

The gospel has advanced from Jews (Acts 1-7) to Samaritans (Acts 8:1-24) and now moves to Gentiles (Acts 8:25-40; Acts 10).

1. The calling of Philip (8:25-29)

The movement of the gospel to Africa was so unanticipated that it required direct divine intervention (Acts 8:26).

The Ethiopian was from the area that is modern Sudan and the description of “eunuch” had come to refer to a person’s government function more than to a person’s physical condition.

The eunuch’s desire for God is not only seen in his long journey to Jerusalem but also in his purchase of a scroll of Isaiah (Acts 8:29).

The ability of someone such as the eunuch to know the true God by coming to Jerusalem to worship was dramatically affected by the conduct of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

We must not overlook the movement of the gospel to a new continent and to a new race.

2. The communication by Philip (8:30-35)

The text that the eunuch was reading was Isaiah 53:7-8, which describes the unjust execution of an innocent man, which is how many people narrowly view Jesus today.

Luke repeated the title of “eunuch,” five times in this passage, which points to the kingdom promise of Isaiah 56:3-8. With the coming of Christ, eunuchs would no longer be excluded from the assembly of God’s worshippers (Deuteronomy 23:1).

3. The conversion through Philip (8:36-40)

The story of the eunuch is an illustration of people being moved by the Spirit of God to come to the Word of God with the help of a person of God.

The eunuch was not only eager to listen to Philip’s preaching about Jesus, he was willing to act upon his desire by being baptized (Acts 8:36).

The earliest known New Testament manuscript of Acts 8:37 is from the sixth century. The insertion of verse 37 into the text over time reflects the early practice of baptism. This shows the inclination of Christians to add formalized liturgy to Christianity.

Philip did not hesitate to welcome the eunuch's desire for obedience.

The phrase "went down into the water" depicts baptism by immersion.

The Ethiopian wasn't alone but had an entourage who:

- knew the eunuch before conversion
- visited Jerusalem with the eunuch
- heard the reading of Isaiah
- saw the baptism of their royal official
- returned with him on the long journey

Philip was removed by God in some fashion, leaving the eunuch to continue on with the joy of the Lord (Acts 8:39). Azotus was about 20 miles north of Gaza toward the coast and Philip continued his preaching ministry until he reached Caesarea, where he settled (Acts 21:8).

May we, by God's grace, respond as enthusiastically to the Lord as Philip and the eunuch.