

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Key Verse: *“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?”*
—Acts 8:36

Selected Scripture:
Acts 8:26-39
charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship.”—Acts 8:27

IN OUR FINAL LESSON

this month, we once again see Philip being used in the ministry of the Gospel. The angel of the Lord directed Philip to go to Gaza, a region in the southwest portion of Israel, about fifty miles from Jerusalem. As he traveled, he met up with “a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the

Upon encountering this Ethiopian eunuch, Philip noticed that he was reading aloud from Isaiah the prophet, so he asked him, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” (vs. 30) He answered, saying, “How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” (vs. 31) The fact that the eunuch had come to Jerusalem to worship, perhaps on more than one occasion, and also had obtained a copy of the book of Isaiah, indicates that he was a Jewish proselyte. Having embraced their faith, and sincerely desiring to learn more, he was drawn to the promises to Israel contained in the Scriptures. He also perhaps knew of Jesus, his teachings and the great works he had

performed, and wondered if there was some connection between his ministry and the words of Israel's prophets.

The eunuch showed Philip the place in the book of Isaiah which he was reading. It said this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." (vss. 32,33) The eunuch asked Philip who the prophet was speaking of. The account continues by saying, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." (vs. 35) We can imagine the excitement of Philip, knowing that here was an individual with no Israelite heritage, but who had come into the Jewish faith, and was now starting to see connections between Jesus' ministry and God's promises to Israel.

Although the account does not provide the details, it is evident that Philip's words to the eunuch were more than sufficient to convince him that Jesus was Israel's Messiah, and the one through whom the promises of the Old Testament would be fulfilled. As they continued to talk, they approached water and, as stated in our Key Verse, the eunuch asked to be baptized. 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." (vs. 37) Based on this response of faith in Jesus, Philip gladly baptized him. The account ends by saying that Philip was then parted from the eunuch, who "went on his way rejoicing."—vs. 39

From this account, we see examples in the actions of both Philip and the eunuch. In the eunuch, we see a sincere hunger to know the truth of God's Word. It is that hunger which all who desire to know more of God's plans and purposes must have in order to expect his truth to be revealed to them. In Philip, we see an example of readiness to explain the truth, and respond to the questions of one who was searching for answers. ■