

Interpreting the Word

Key Verse: *“Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”*
—Acts 8:35

Selected Scripture:
Acts 8:26-40

The important thing was that Philip obeyed the angel, not debating whether his life would be in danger by taking a wilderness road. “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”—I Sam. 15:22

Philip obeyed the angel and came upon an Ethiopian eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of Ethiopia, reading God’s Word. It was here that the Spirit told Philip to stop the chariot and introduce himself to the eunuch. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah, “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” (chap. 53:7) This is one of the Messianic prophecies. The problem was that the eunuch was reading but not understanding. The Scriptures tell us the method God uses to help those seeking him to understand his Word. We read, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have

PHILIP HAD BEEN IN-
structed by an angel to take the road that goes south from Jerusalem toward Gaza. It was the Holy Spirit that guided the apostles and evangelists like Philip—the power from God that energizes the mind. Whether the angel had told Philip whom to look for is not indi-

not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"—Rom. 10:14,15

For those who are truly seeking, God will open a way for them. "Seek, and ye shall find." (Matt. 7:7) Philip was given the opportunity to help the Ethiopian eunuch to understand the scripture regarding the suffering of Christ. Evidently the eunuch knew about baptism, for he had heard of John the Baptist and his work of baptizing for the remission of sins.—Matt. 3:6,11

John explained that his baptism was for repentance for sins against the Law, but that Jesus' baptism would be with the Holy Spirit and with fire, symbolic of trouble that was to come upon the Jewish nation, and eventually upon all Gentiles to be called into the body of Christ.—I Pet. 4:12,13

As they were traveling they came upon a body of water and the eunuch asked Philip if he could be baptized. (vs. 36) There was no hesitation. The chariot stopped and the eunuch was baptized. The Apostle Paul explains the real meaning of baptism, when he says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Rom. 12:1,2

Full consecration, baptism, and Spirit begetting are the ways to a new life in Christ. Laying down of life as the Apostle Paul urges in the Book of Romans is to follow in the steps of Christ. Romans 6:3 says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" ■