

The Ethiopian Eunuch

Key Verse: “So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”

—Acts 8:38, *New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Acts 8:26-40

OUR KEY VERSE DEMONSTRATES the spontaneity and immediacy of the early church’s evangelizing work. Regarding the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, many Christians delight in his enthusiastic observation that, “Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”—Acts 8:36, *NKJV*

Leading to this moment, the Lord’s angel instructed Philip to “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.” The eunuch was reading Isaiah—the kingdom prophet. This was a golden opportunity. The Lord’s spirit gave Philip encouragement saying, “Go near and overtake this chariot. So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the Prophet Isaiah, and said, Do you understand what you are reading?”—vss. 26-30, *NKJV*

In God’s providence the eunuch was reading Isaiah 53, the prophecy of the suffering of Christ. Philip was invited

to come up into the chariot and, starting with Isaiah's prophecy, he began to preach Jesus. Many Scriptures were likely considered, as well as Philip's personal testimony and that of many who had known Jesus. Convinced of the Truth, the newly converted Ethiopian desired to give his life to the Lord. "The eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (vss. 36,37, *NKJV*) Then, as stated in our Key Verse, Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, and he was baptized.

We desire to be as responsive and sensitive to the will of God as this Ethiopian. May our aspirations be guided by the commission that Paul urged upon Timothy: "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."—II Tim. 4:1-5, *NKJV*

We too should bear in mind that the time will come when judgment will be rendered. All wrongs shall be made right, and all that is righteous shall be rewarded. "God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil." (Eccles. 12:14, *NKJV*) Be ready to preach the word in season and out of season. Always be on the lookout for opportunities to serve the Lord. Philip was of this mind and recognized a marvelous opening to approach the Ethiopian. The Lord opens doors for us to serve him. We desire that hesitancy will not bar us from entering them. ■