

ANTIOCH BIBLE CLASS

LESSON SUBJECT

JUST ONE EUNUCH

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ACTS 8: 26-40

MEMORY VERSE: ACTS 8:37. 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.

INTRODUCTION.

“God will stop making worlds just to save one person”. (W.E. Giddens). That quote is proven true in this lesson where God calls Philip from a great revival in Samaria, to go to Gaza and preach to one Ethiopian eunuch. We know very little about this eunuch, except the snap shot these few scriptures convey to us. We don’t even know his name. What we are told about him convinces us that God knew him well and that fact alone gives us a great respect for this man. By piecing together some facts we do know we can have a broader view of just what the lesson is about.

- a. Ethiopia is a large territory south of Egypt and bordering on the Arabian Sea. It is several hundred miles from Jerusalem.
- b. Num. 12:1. Moses married an Ethiopian.
- c. Jer. 38:7. It was an Ethiopian eunuch, Ebedmelech, which delivered Jeremiah from the dungeon.
- d. The Queen of Sheba (Saba) came from this same general territory. It seems that this region had a history of female rulers since our lesson reveals that Candace is the current ruler.

Exactly who this eunuch of our lesson was, we do not know. He could have been a native Ethiopian. He could also have been one of many Jews who either migrated there or were carried captive there at some time. There is some information that says that Solomon fathered a son by the queen of Sheba and thus his offspring could come into the picture. What we do know about this eunuch is more important than his lineage or nativity. He has just been to Jerusalem to worship, and this tells us something about him. He has the scriptures in his possession and is reading them, and this tells us something about him also. In fact he is reading the scriptures when Philip finds him. God knows the heart of this eunuch and miraculously creates a rendezvous between him and Philip that could have only occurred with God leading it. Philip takes the scripture he is reading, which was from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and preaches Christ to him. The eunuch accepts Christ and is baptized and then goes on his journey back to Ethiopia rejoicing. Thus a man of great authority becomes a follower of Christ, and Christianity spreads to his country, many miles from where it started. Just one Ethiopian with a hungry heart and God makes it possible for him to hear the wonderful message of salvation.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS AND THOUGHTS.

MONDAY. – ACTS 8:26. PHILIP RECEIVES AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM GOD.

SCRIPTURE.

V26. 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.

COMMENTS.

In the midst of a great revival in Samaria, God calls the preacher of that revival, to leave the “great joy” they were having, and go down to Gaza. “And he arose and went”. He does not hesitate or make excuses: God has called and he must follow. The natural inclination of any “evangelist” would have been to stay where the excitement and progress was. But God knew what Philip could not have known: There was a man with a hungry heart on his way back to Ethiopia that must be helped. It would take Philip about 3 days to get to Gaza, about 60 miles away, and that is where our lesson finds him.

TUESDAY. – ACTS 8:27-31. SOMEBODY TO GUIDE ME.

SCRIPTURE.

V27. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a 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. 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? 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.

COMMENTS.

There was a eunuch of great authority as treasurer of Ethiopia, who had been to Jerusalem to worship, and is returning home. The probability here is that he had come to Jerusalem to worship, knowing only the law. Why had he come so far? Maybe it was at a time of one of the feast days, when people came from all over, as they did at Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11). Remember there was a powerful church at Jerusalem, under the leadership of the apostles. How did he miss that? That same question could be asked of Paul. The eunuch was riding in his chariot and reading scriptures written by the prophet Isaiah. Where did he get these scriptures? Philip asks him if he understands what he is reading, to which he replied, “How can I except some man should guide me”? That is why God sent Philip to Gaza. Only one man that we know of was impacted by this meeting. That is all it takes for God’s providence to work.

WEDNESDAY. – ACTS 8:32-35. ISAIAH’S GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

SCRIPTURE.

V32. The place of the scripture which he read was this, H 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? 35. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus.

COMMENTS.

The eunuch was reading from the scriptures in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah that foretold the sufferings of Christ. He did not know what these scriptures applied to. That is why Philip was sent by God to him. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus". From the Old Testament Jesus is revealed. A serious mistake that is often made is the idea that the gospel is only found in the New Testament. However, Jesus can be fully preached from every book of the Bible. Further, the Old Testament was the only scriptures written at that time. From this passage Philip preached salvation, and led the eunuch to the Lord and water baptism.

THURSDAY. ACTS 8:36-38. THE EUNUCH BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED.

SCRIPTURE.

V36. 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. 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.

COMMENTS.

As Philip and the eunuch travelled along in the chariot, with Philip preaching from Is. 53, they pass a place of water. The eunuch said to Philip, "see, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized"? Now Is. 53 does not mention baptism, but Philip is using this passage of scripture to explain Christ and all his work of redemption, which would necessarily include water baptism. Philip's answer to his question was expressly inquiring as to whether or not the eunuch believed the message of Christ "WITH ALL OF HIS HEART". The eunuch then made a positive, voluntary expression of faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Then they both went "down" into the water and the eunuch was baptized. The express statements that they "went down into the water" and then "came up out of the water", leaves no room for questioning that baptism is by immersion.

FRIDAY. ACTS 8:39-40. THE EUNUCH FINDS A HIDDEN TREASURE.

SCRIPTURE.

V39. 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. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

COMMENTS.

In Mt. 13:44, Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven unto a treasure hid in a field, which when a man hath found, for joy thereof, he sells all that he has and buys that field. The eunuch has just found that treasure. He has been to Jerusalem to worship and is returning home with questions unresolved in his mind. Philip comes along and preaches Christ and his sufferings and salvation to him and he discovers a treasure he never knew. He was a man of great authority, the keeper of the treasure of Ethiopia, but there was a great emptiness in his heart. That emptiness has now been filled by faith in Christ and the eunuch goes on his rejoicing.

SUMMARY.

Why do we have this story recorded in sacred scripture? Perhaps there are many reasons, but primarily it tells us that God will, indeed, go to all lengths to save just one hungry, humble, helpless person. This is a fact that is demonstrated many times in the word of the Lord. In his own ministry it was so often to one single individual, like the woman taken in adultery that Jesus ministered to. God is certainly able to save a multitude at once, but he always does so one heart at a time. This lesson also demonstrates the marvelous providence of God, bringing the eunuch and Philip together, in a desert, in order to be sure that not one hungry soul is passed by. It also shows the indispensable value of the Old Testament in preaching the saving message of Christ. There is not one single element of the entire Christian experience that is not declared in the Old Testament. This lesson also demonstrates that God has chosen that through the "foolishness of preaching" he will save those who believe. The eunuch went on his way rejoicing because his questions about this scripture were answered. But more than that, the question about life itself was answered on that day. How much impact his life and experience had upon all his acquaintances back in Ethiopia, even possibly including the queen's court, we will not know this side of eternal life. Maybe he became the nucleus of a thriving church in his own country. That would be the grand finale to this wonderful story.

QUESTIONS.

1. Who was this eunuch? Discuss the possibilities.
2. Why had he traveled so far to worship?

3. What was missing in his life and how could it be
4. Name other instances in both the O. T., and N.T., where God worked with only one person.
5. Name some other great lesson from the O.T. that can be used to preach Christ. There are many.

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This lesson is adaptable for use as Sunday School lessons, group study lessons, church Bible study lesson, personal daily devotions, etc.