

Philip's Individual Instruction of the Ethiopian Eunuch

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

A. Acts 8:26-40

B. Most of the sermons so far have involved large numbers of people.

1. The gospel message was the same: Christ is preached, responses were faith, repentance and baptism
2. Will the same message work with just one person?

C. The Ethiopian Eunuch

1. "The term eunuch was given to persons in authority at court, to whom its literal meaning did not necessarily apply. A castrato is only one of this word's meanings; it can also mean a chamberlain or officer of the state."
2. Treasurer - "[Arabic] makhzen, magazine in English; a word which signifies a collection of stores or treasures, or the place where they are laid up; a store of treasures, or repository of precious, valuable things."
3. From Ethiopia - "The Ethiopians mentioned here are those who inhabited the peninsula of Meroe, south of Egypt. It is the district called Atbara during the time of the Mohammedans."
4. Candace - "The officers of Queen Candace, who in these days reigned over the Ethiopians. The original Candace was a masculine-type woman, and blind of one eye. Though this is not the Candace mentioned in the text, it establishes the fact that a queen of this name did reign in this place. Pliny, giving an account of the report made by Nero's messengers sent to examine this country, says, 'The edifices of the city were few; a woman reigned there of the name of Candace, which name had passed to their queens, successively, for many years.'"
5. Luke is an eminent historian!

D. A very religious man who had traveled a great distance to worship God

1. Very likely a displaced Jew who, like Daniel, because of his godly work ethic made himself useful to a foreign ruler
2. Possibly a proselyte Jew, either converted on his business travels for the queen, or perhaps converted by the enclave of Jews that existed there from the time of the kings of Israel
3. The important part is that this man was a believer and follower of God, even though he kept a covenant no longer valid
4. He journeyed a vast distance for that era to keep the Jewish feasts
5. He was reading as he journeyed. In all likelihood, he had a charioteer and a bodyguard as was the custom of such men as they journeyed
 - a. Acts 8:38 - "So he commanded the chariot to stand still..."
6. He was a prospect; his heart and mind were prepared, ready soil for the seed of the gospel

I. THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

A. Philip is sent to the eunuch - Acts 8:26-29

1. The who that does the preaching is not important; he just needs to recognize and take advantage of opportunities
 2. The circumstances by which one hears the gospel are not important; they just speak to the providence of God, Who ensures that everyone who want to hear will have the opportunity to do so
- B. Philip preaches Jesus to him - Acts 8:30-35
1. The eunuch was reading Isaiah; Philip asks if he understands. A great way to begin a Bible study, with an open Bible and a question about it
 2. The eunuch asks Philip to help him - Acts 8:31-34
 - a. He expresses a need for someone to guide him, and invites Philip to sit with him; establish proximity and a setting that evokes sharing as fellow seekers
 - b. Isa. 53:7-8
 - c. Beginning with that Scripture, Philip preaches Jesus to him Acts 8:35
 - d. Excellent place to start... where the prospect is in his own spiritual journey
 3. "But what did Philip preach; how did the study unfold?!" Not relevant.
 - a. Every study will differ; there is no formula or recipe
 - b. Every teacher differs from every other one in ability, knowledge, experience, approach, pace, etc
 - c. Every prospect differs from every other one in background, knowledge, experiences, ability and pace of learning, interest level, etc
 4. What is important? He preached from the scriptures about Jesus, and the eunuch asked to be baptized
- C. The eunuch is baptized - Acts 8:36-40
1. The eunuch expresses a desire to be baptized - Acts 8:36-37
 - a. Philip replies that if he believes with all his heart, he may
 - b. The eunuch confesses his faith in Jesus as the Son of God
 - c. Both Philip and the eunuch go down into the water
 - d. Philip then baptizes him
 - e. When they come up out of the water, Philip is called away and is found at Azotus, and continues preaching in the cities until he arrives at Caesarea
 - f. The eunuch goes on his way rejoicing; he knows his relationship with God has greatly changed; that's important to a devout man