

Acts 8:26-40 ACTS-[21]-The ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

PRELIMS. The Church has been growing in Samaria thru the **preaching** of the **Word**, the **preaching** of **Christ**. But there is a **counterfeit believer** Simon the Sorcerer! He had faith for the wrong reasons! His **heart** was not right with **God!** He thought **money** could **purchase salvation!** He needed to **repent** as he was in the **grip/bond** of sin!

PHILIP and HIS CALL

Philip was the man that **God used** in the **revival** in **Samaria**. God has more work for him for “*an angel of the Lord... 'Go south...to Gaza'.*”[26] Its a **fact** that we must accept – God uses some people **more** than others!

Note also: Philip is **pulled away** from where the **crowds** and the **success** are, Samaria revival – to a lonely road in a desert to minister to **one man!** In a day, where success is quantified in **numbers** we need to take note of this fact. Philip is called away to minister to the **smallest** of flocks! **APP One** soul is **important** to **God!** Nicodemus? Zacchaeus, Woman of Samaria! But how much was the revival due to **her 'preparatory'** work? All of these were ministered to as **individuals** and **went on** to do greater things! This is **personal evangelism!**

But note it was the **Spirit** who initiated it all “*The Spirit told Philip*”[29] I wish the Bible told us more about **how** we discern the Spirit! Do you **always** recognise the **Spirit's** promptings from Satan **masquerading?** How long does it normally take you to detect Satan's work? Paul was able to say, “*We are not ignorant of his devices*”[2 Cor 2;11] only **after** years of **experience!** He was '**exercised**'/**concerned** re God's will!

So Philip “*started out*” and “*on his way he met an Ethiopian Eunuch*” [27], the **very person** God had **planned** he should meet! **APP** A very important matter regarding guidance is that God works at **both ends**. God had directed Eliezer, and Rebekkah; Philip – and the Eunuch so that they **met** at **exactly** the **right place** at the right **time!** It was the exactly right time for the Eunuch! He needed to be reading about the 'sheep led to the slaughter' **precisely when** Philip 'arrived' to explain it to him. There was nobody, but nobody in all that area who could have helped him! Philip Yancey tells us when he landed in Budapest, a stranger to speak at a Conference in 3 hrs time, he realised he left the power cord of his PC in a shop in America! He could not speak the language and he

needed to update his lecture urgently! He knew nothing about Budapest. Then a man came up to him immediately 'Can I help you? That man had just seen a PC shop a few streets away (there were only 2 in Budapest) which had the very cord Yancey needed! **God still works** at both ends – sending someone at exactly the right moment!

God can be very **specific!** “*Go to that chariot and stay near it*”[29]! The Spirit did **not** say **anymore** to Philip after this. And that is true to life. God can be very specific at **some** points and then **leave** us to our own **sanctified common sense**. In [ch 12] Peter is **miraculously** delivered from prison, and then **abandoned** in the street!

Then “*Philip ran up to the chariot*”[30] Philip was **excited**, he **ran!** Like the Psalmist 'I will **run** in the way of Your commandments'![Psa 119:32] How **much more excited** he must have been when he “*heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet*”[30]! **APP** In **that** culture how rare? In **our** culture how rare? They used to always read **aloud** in these days! Philip must have rejoiced – here is a **foreigner** interested in Isaiah!

The ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

A State official – **Chancellor** of the **Exchequer** “*an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace queen of the Ethiopians*”[27]! Government ministers need salvation too! God is interested in them also! He wants their salvation. God is interested in the those on the **Front** Page of our newspapers – and the **Back** page – and **Page 3!**

Now **Ethiopia** in these days was what is now known as '**The Upper Nile**', area from **Aswan** to **Khartoum** (Sudan now I think) So this man, is presumably a **black** African,

God had **obviously** been at **work** in his **life!** (1) He came a **very long distance** “*to Jerusalem to worship*”[27c] This man travelled over 200 miles (by slow coach!) **APP** How far would **you** travel to a Christian Conference? Over 200 miles away? Would you go 25 miles to **Perth?** Would you go as far for a Xn Conference as you would to a football match or a **music concert?**

Being from Africa or wherever, he would have been brought up in a religion **other** than the God of Israel! Whenever, or however, he came to hear of Israel's God something about Him **rang true** to him – so much so, that he was prepared to make a long journey to find out more! God

was **leading** him. But he also came to “*worship*” God![27] Worship is from **worthy** – he had some understanding that God was worthy!

But he had something else of great importance – he had the **Scriptures!** He obtained a copy somewhere – of course, he had the means to obtain one - if one **could** be obtained, for they were very **scarce!** **APP** What do **you** spend with what is '**over and above**' the necessities of life? Are **you** keen enough to get that book which will help you 'get right with God'?

I think most businessmen **work** when they travel. It amazes me how much time businessmen spend on travel – but a lot of them do work while travelling. This man was reading the Bible! **APP** What do you read on the train? At the dentist? On the bus? It amazes me how few Xns read Xn magazines and Xn books! It is a **means** of **grace!** God uses and blesses literature and there is **much good** as well as bad literature today!

The INTERVIEW

Now Philip begins – and he is **very brave!** He **asks** this high ranking official a **question** which could be a bit **insulting!** It referred to his **intelligence!** “*Do you understand what you are reading?*”[30]! If you saw Gordon Brown on the train reading would you feel like asking him did he understand what he was reading? However, the fact was this Chancellor didn't mind at all - he even invited him up into his chariot! **APP** I think people of all classes might be much more **receptive** to **humble/honest** people who **genuinely** show a godly interest in them!

We live in an age when many people **don't think!** As soon as they have a moment to relax they plug things into their ears and listen to have **music!** It is almost as if they were **afraid** to think in case they will **discover** things they don't want to know about! **Escapism!** Well this Chancellor **was thinking** about what he was reading!

It is now time for the Chancellor to ask questions! “*Who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else*”[33] He thought it **could** have been Isaiah himself! For all he knew it could have been! Here is a man who is **thinking** and **asking questions!** It is a **good** sign when people start asking questions! When children ask questions, it means they are **growing!** God gave us **minds** to think. With “*all our mind*”!!

Immediately Philip “*told him the good news about Jesus*”[35]! Note it was the **good** things! I really do wish we had more data of **all** that Philip

said to him! But we trust that the Holy Spirit has given us all we **need** to know - from Scripture! *Now note: the **need also** for the teacher and instructor? Look: “*How can I...unless someone explains it to me*”[31]!

There is a **role** in the Church for the **teaching ministry!** You get the idea the Chancellor was **exasperated!** Philip explained about the **Lamb of God** suffering “*led..to the slaughter*” [32]! The **atonement!**

The BAPTISM

Whatever Philip said, the Chancellor had **little difficulty believing** and in **accepting** it! “*Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptised?*”[36] Again, I really wish we had more info about all that was said! But we must be subject to what the Spirit in inspiring Luke wrote. **APP** Friends, it **does** seem, that the gospel **is** actually **simple!** Look at the footnote: “*Philip said 'If you believe with all your heart, you may'. The Eunuch answered 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'*”[37]!

That, at the most, it seems, is all that was asked! Some Churches **demand** that you believe this, that, and the next thing as well. Some denomination **will** allow people to the Lord's Supper but **not** to become members of that Church until you conform to **everything** 'they' understand the Scriptures to teach. Ie, they **admit** that the qualifications to sit at the Lord's Supper/get to heaven, is **less** than the qualifications to join their Church! We can in our own way add to the Word of God!

They “*both...went down into the water*” but then they **both had** to for you cannot sprinkle water on someone at the seashore without getting your own feet wet! (I have tried several times!) Anyway... ..

And then, one of those occasions when '**Now you see him, now you don't**', “*the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away and the eunuch did not see again*”![39] I think I would have found that rather **disconcerting** and **confusing!** *But lo and behold – **not a bit** of it for the Chancellor, he “*went on his way rejoicing*” [39] Isn't that **marvellous?**

Why was he rejoicing? Because he found **Christ!** It wasn't Philip – it was **Christ** that was meaningful and **precious** to him!

And Philip – what did **he** think of it all? Well, he was 'on a high' as we say and began a **preaching tour** – all on his own – **up the coast** from Azotus to Caesarea! “*preaching the gospel*”[40]!! Hallelujah!