

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Saving Sovereignty on Display **Acts 8:25-40**

Keywords: Acts 8, Sovereignty, Salvation, Christianity in Africa, Ethiopian Eunuch

PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: In one of the many unique stories found in Acts, we watch God take a man from a vibrant mission field where many are coming to a saving faith and He moves him into the wilderness for one man. Why? What does this show us about God and His saving work?

I. Introduction.

- A. Read 8:25-40.
- B. God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility is seen in living color here. Not mere theology but life.
- C. When we talk about God we must remember that He is not the sum of His attributes.
- D. However, when talking about sovereignty the challenge is often found in understanding how the saving work of God operates.
 - 1. Two extremes are common. One says that God is sovereign but sovereignly chooses to not choose who would be saved. It is up to the free will of every person. The other extreme is that because He is sovereign that it really doesn't matter if we evangelize or do missions. God will save His people.
 - 2. Well today we have a story that helps us see how God saves. Not in a theological explanation but in the life of a real person. We have the gospel being preached to people who are on the fringes of humanity in the mind of a typical Jew. Those Samaritans are coming to faith. We have the whole attention of the Jerusalem church focused on this activity. We have a man, Philip, who is apparently being used by God to do a good and large work of evangelism. God is moving in Samaria!

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3. And in the middle of this account we have a story of an Ethiopian in the desert all the while this saving work of God is happening. What about him? Why this sudden shift in attention?
4. Well, first we had an example of a false convert in Simon the magician. And now we have an example of a true convert in this man from Ethiopia. But what we actually are seeing is how God saves people and it is worth observing.

II. Five Aspects of How God Saves.

A. God uses the gospel to save (25).

B. The second aspect is that none of God's elect shall be missed (26-29).

1. There is a bit of history I need to convey in this section and the details given in this section are helpful in seeing how historically verifiable Luke is writing this document. Everyone in that area would be able to picture the place described.
 - a. The desert road mentioned is the less traveled road due to how dry and harsh it was. It was one of two roads to choose. Near Gaza was a place of water which all would stop before going the rest of the way to Egypt, the hottest and driest part of the journey.
 - b. This man is described as an eunuch.
 - (1) The normal meaning is that he has been castrated at some point in his life.
 - (2) However, the term also became a word used to describe government officials. The thought is that the eunuch often became a trusted part of the inner circle of a king. Over

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time it sort of became an idiomatic way to describing an official. Because of this man's position, it is a merely using that idiom.

- (3) His position was very high and trusted. He was essentially head of the Finance Ministry.
- (4) The fact that he was sitting in his chariot speaks to the high level of power and wealth. Very few would be able to move about in that way. It would be similar to having a private jet today.

c. Candace is another verifiable fact of history. It is actually more of a title than a name. To explain it requires a bit of an explanation about Ethiopia.

- (1) This Ethiopia is not the same as the modern-day one. It would have been above most of the current nation and was known as the kingdom of Meroe (May-row-ee) that was also known as the Kingdom of Kush in the Old Testament.
- (2) It was considered to be on the very edge of the civilized world from the Roman Empire's perspective. Very unique and exotic to the Romans, it was a flourishing kingdom.
- (3) It was ruled by a male king but their kings were thought to be incarnations of the sun god and so they functioned more in a ceremonial way.
- (4) The real work of administrating the kingdom was by a queen mother of incredible power. These queens carried the titular name of Candace.

2. The sovereignty of God in salvation is seen here in the sending of an angel to Philip (26).

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- C. The third aspect is the need for the Word of God and instruction (30-35).
- D. The fourth aspect of God sovereignty in saving people is that He uses teachers to instruct sinners (31, 35).
- E. Finally, we see that when God saves there is never a fight or reluctance to obey and do what is right by the one saved (36-38).

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III. Conclusion.

- A. And then he was gone (39-40).
 - 1. As the man comes up out of the water (btw, this is immersion not sprinkling) the Holy Spirit take Philip away.
 - a. But the Ethiopian rejoiced regardless, which is quite impressive.
 - b. And Christianity came to Africa that day.
 - 2. God's work there was finished. And so He put Philip in a town called Azotus and he continued with his work.
- B. So in the first part of Acts 8 we see the gospel going to many and many believing. And in the second part of chapter 8 we see God's care for one man, in the middle of nowhere, reading the scripture and needing someone to teach him.
 - 1. Both are wonderful works of God.
 - 2. Both are ways God uses to save His people.
- C. A question about translations.
 - 1. I want to point out to you a translation issue that you may have noticed. In vs 37 most of your translations will have some sort of mark to indicate that there is an issue about that verse.
 - 2. I did not want to confuse anyone today by addressing it but I need to, so Lord willing my next sermon will be on why some verses are different in various translation.
 - 3. In addition, in chapter 9 there are some more areas where the KJV will look different from the other translations. So I want to try to make this understandable to you all.
- D. So, because we love the Word of God here at Missio and we want to be confident in our translation, I pray that when I preach next time that it will be of great help to you. But I ask you to come well-rested and ready to listen.

Benediction

May our gracious Father in heaven cause us to be found in Christ, clothed on in His righteousness which comes through faith from the hand of God. May we know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings as we become conformed to His death. Amen.