

7/8/07

The Salvation Of The Ethiopian Eunuch
Acts 8:26-40

Salvation is the mystery of God as well as the gift of God and though we may not understand how God is at work in every situation before salvation, we do know that God works to bring about salvation.

The case of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion gives us a clear picture as to how God brought salvation to this Gentile proselyte. Acts 8:26-40

- I.** God used Philip to reach out to the Ethiopian eunuch. vs. 26-28
 - II.** God used Philip by the Spirit of God to illuminate the Ethiopian eunuch. vs. 29-35
 - III.** God used Philip to offer salvation to the Ethiopian eunuch. vs. 36-40
- I. God used Philip to reach out to the Ethiopian eunuch. vs. 26-28**
 - A.** Philip was told by an angel of God to leave Samaria and go to Gaza. vs. 26
 - 1.** The command was to arise and go.
 - a.** The instruction "arise" is in the aorist tense speaks of immediate action.

- b.** The word "go" is in the imperfect present middle, indicating a continuous action.
- 2.** Angels are God's ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. Heb.1:14
 - a.** Earlier in the book of Acts an angel delivered Peter from prison. Act. 5:19
 - b.** Angels were created with a free-will and one third of them followed Satan in his rebellion. Rev. 12:4
 - 3.** Samaria was responding to the gospel as the church was scattered through persecution and Philip was the key person who brought the gospel to them. 8:4-8
 - a.** The people had received the gospel and been baptized.
 - b.** The sorcerer Simon had also received the gospel and had been baptized.
 - c.** The sorcerer Simon made the mistake of attempting to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit to benefit himself and was rebuked sharply by Peter, calling him to repent.
 - 4.** Gaza was a deserted place.
 - a.** The distance was about sixty miles Southwest of Jerusalem, close to the border of Egypt.
 - b.** A total of ninety-five miles from Samaria.

- c. A considerable distance to travel in those days.

B. Philip obeyed, he arose and went. vs. 27a

1. He did not allow the success of Samaria to hinder his obedience to go somewhere else when God called him.
 - a. Both verbs “he arose and went” are in the aorist tense implying prompt obedience.
 - b. Too often people want to congregate around a work rather than propagate the work.
 - c. The danger is in getting caught up in the success, wanting to receive the glory.
2. He knew God guides a step at a time to prove our genuine faith and trust.
 - a. God had raised him up as a deacon. Acts 6
 - b. God had sent him to Samaria. Acts 8
 - c. God was now sending him to the Ethiopian eunuch.
 - d. God doesn’t revel everything all at once for our lives!
3. He knew obedience was better than sacrifice of service. 1Sam. 15:22
 - a. We can make nothing up.
 - b. We can not undo anything.
 - c. We can not earn anything.

C. Philip saw a man of Ethiopia. vs. 27b-28

1. He was a eunuch, one to oversee the bed-chamber or harem of women that belonged to the king. vs. 27b-c
 - a. The expression behold “idou” implies a sudden sight and surprise.
 - b. Eunuchs were castrated to posed no sexual threat to the women.
 - c. Eunuchs were barred from the congregation. Deut. 23:1
 - d. Eunuchs were given a tremendous promise and future hope. Is. 56:3-8
2. He was a man of great authority under Candace the Queen mother of Ethiopia. vs. 27d
 - a. Candace is a title like Pharaoh.
 - b. He had great influence and power vested to him.
 - c. He would of been recognized by the Roman authorities if he had come on political business.
 - d. Ethiopia was the name of a kingdom on the Nile, between modern Aswan and Khartoum and Sudan.
3. He was in charge of all her treasury. vs. 27e
 - a. A man of responsible stewardship.
 - b. A man of loyal character.
4. He had come to worship at Jerusalem to worship and was returning. vs. 27f-28a
 - a. He was without any doubt a proselyte.

- b. He is believed to be a proselyte of the gate or God-fearer, one who of course was not circumcised by virtue of his emasculation.
 - c. He had traveled far to make his pilgrimage in devotion to God.
5. He was sitting on his chariot and he was reading Isaiah the prophet. vs. 28b-c
- a. Whether he obtained the scroll at Jerusalem or he possessed his own copy is unknown but he was a man of means.
 - b. Isaiah was God's prophet who was called by God to call His people to repentance from their sin of not trusting in , instead of their own alliances with Egypt and their idols.

Illustration

Charlemagne gave instructions that when he died he should be buried seated in the royal posture of a ruling monarch on a throne. Then he directed that the Gospels should be laid on his knees, his sword beside him, the imperial crown on his head, and the royal mantle on his shoulders. And this way his body remained for 180 years.

About 1,000 A.D., the tomb was opened by the Emperor Otho. They found the skeleton of Charlemagne, dissolved and dismembered into various hideous postures. The skull still wearing the crown. And the body finger of the skeleton was

pointing to the verse of Scripture, "for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Matt. 16:26

The various relics were collected and used in the coronation of the emperors of Germany to signify their greatness and succession from Charlemagne. #5347

Application

1. God is interested in my obedience to His will more than my work for Him, though often my obedience will lead me to His work. Eph. 2:10
* Peter's obedience to the will of God to go to the house of Cornelius.
2. God is looking to see if I am settled in comfort and security in what God has done or if I am open to venture out in faith as He guides my steps. Ps. 37:23
3. God says that He honors His word above His name and He has chose to reveal Himself through His word. Ps. 138:2c
4. God's thoughts and ways are higher than the heaven, different from ours that is why God call Philip away from a flourishing place to a desert place. Is. 55:8-9
5. God will be tuning my ear through obedience to His will. Rev. 2:7a-b

God used Philip to reach out to the Ethiopian eunuch!

II. God used Philip by the Spirit of God to illuminate the Ethiopian eunuch. vs. 29-35

A. Philip was led and guided to the Ethiopian. vs. 29

1. The Spirit said to Philip. vs. 29a
 - a. The Holy Spirit of God resides in the believer and speaks personally.
 - b. The Holy Spirit will later in Acts speak and say, “Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them”. Acts 13:2
2. The Spirit guided Philip specifically, “Go near and overtake his chariot”. vs. 29b
 - a. The timing was chosen by God.
 - b. The approach was given by God.

B. Philip engaged the Ethiopian in conversation. vs. 30-31

1. Philip ran to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. vs. 30a-b
 - a. The prophet Isaiah’s name means “Yahweh is salvation.”
 - b. You can just imagine, if you were reading and someone all of a sudden ran to you.
 - c. Here again natural circumstance, but God has prepared the heart of the Ethiopian, for God works on both ends to tie them together.

2. Philip questioned him and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”. vs. 39c-d
 - a. The question could of certainly been offensive to the Ethiopian’s pride.
 - b. The question was in line with what was in the heart and need of the Ethiopian.
3. The Ethiopian acknowledged his ignorance of the passage and his need of help. vs. 31
 - a. And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” vs. 31a-c
 - * The acknowledgment of one’s need of help is necessary!
 - b. And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. vs. 31d
 - * The request must come of one’s own free-will!

C. Philip heard the Ethiopian reading from Isaiah, regarding the Suffering Servant. vs. 32-33

1. The passage is found in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Is. 53:7-8
 - a. The translation he read was from the LXX version.
 - b. The first verse depicted the loving substitution in place of man’s death, without complaint or defense., “The place in the Scripture which he read

was this: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth.” vs. 32

- c. The second verse depicted the undeserved punishment for man to be declared, “In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.” vs. 33

- 1) The Jews would not declare His generation, they rejected Jesus.
- 2) The believer, the church would!
- 3) The eunuch had this expensive scrolls he had obtained but it was of no worth to him until, he could understand it!

2. The interpretation of this passage by the Jews is interesting.

- a. The Jews identified this section as pertaining to Jeremiah the prophet, who suffered much as the weeping prophet.
- b. The Jews also identify this section as pertaining to the Nation of Israel who has suffered.

D. Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian. vs. 34-35

1. The Ethiopian was teachable and answered Philip, “I ask you, of whom

does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” vs. 34

- a. He was asking for clarity.
 - b. He was asking for absolute truth.
2. Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture preached Jesus to him. vs. 35
- a. Philip knew the word.
 - b. Philip was ready to expound the Scriptures.
 - c. Philip knew the Scriptures teach only Jesus.
- * Jesus did the same for the two men on the rode to Emmaus. Lk. 24:27

Illustration

When on October 12, 1492, Christopher Columbus took possession of one of the Bahaman Islands, he believed he was fulfilling prophecy. It is not perhaps widely known that the “admiral of the oceans” discovered America believing he was under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, not the light of the stars. In 1502 he wrote to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella: “In the carrying out of this enterprise of the Indies, neither reason nor mathematics nor maps were any use to me: fully accomplished were the word of Isaiah”, referring to the gathering of the remnant of Israel in the last days. #1869

Application

1. God will guide us to the unbelievers, if we will make ourselves available, for this is the heart of God, He is not willing that any perish. 2Pet. 3:9
2. God's Spirit will always prepare those engagement with others for conversation in the most natural means through the word, as Paul tells us, how shall they call, believe and hear without a preacher. Rom. 10:14
3. God's Spirit will direct us to discuss the Scriptures to give answers for the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear. 1Pet. 3:15
4. God's Holy Spirit is the One to turn on the light, for the dark heart of man. 1Cor. 2:9-16
5. God wants us to give to people only Jesus, Who is the spirit of prophecy. Rev. 19:10
 - a. As I was teaching on the qualifications of elders, bishops and deacons, God convicted a young economist to except Jesus as Savior and Lord, it is the word of God, regardless were we read or study!
 - b. He brought his wife, a vascular surgeon, to the mid-week study, where I was teaching on the abandonment of the faith in First Timothy 4:1 and she was convicted of her sin and excepted Christ also!
 - c. It is key for salvation is the word of God, the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, the man is only the vessel, who is not to contaminate the content of the message, receive glory!

God used Philip by the Spirit of God to illuminate the Ethiopian eunuch!

III. God used Philip to offer salvation to the Ethiopian eunuch. vs. 36-40

- A. The Ethiopian asked Philip to baptize him. vs. 36-37
 1. The Ethiopian asked as they were going down the road and came to some water, "See, here is water, what hinders me from being baptized?" vs. 36
 - a. The word see "idou" is the same word as "behold", implying a sudden surprise, for water was and is scarce in that region. vs. 27b
 - b. The Ethiopian had been baptized as a proselyte already.
 - c. The Ethiopian had already received in his heart Jesus but Philip could not know his heart.
 2. Philip told him nothing would hinder him, if he believed Jesus was his Savior, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." vs. 37a-c
 - a. The context does not teach mere belief in general.
 - b. The context is belief in Jesus Christ.
 - c. The only thing that would hinder the Ethiopian from being baptized in

water would be the lack of belief with all his heart. Jn. 17:9

- d. The RSV has this verse in italics or omits it completely, to infer it is not in the original and the American Standard in brackets.
3. The Ethiopian said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God” vs. 37d-e
 - a. He was clear about Who the passage was speaking.
 - b. He excepted and believed that the person was Jesus who died for him, a sinner.
 - c. He acknowledged the need of repentance and confessing Jesus as the Christ, who is the Son of God, God Who became man, the prophetic Messiah.
- B.** The Ethiopian was baptized by Philip. vs. 38-39
1. Philip and the Ethiopian went down into the water and Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. vs. 38
 - a. Water is a public confession of what has happens in one’s heart by faith, being born-again. Jn. 3:3-5
 - b. Water baptism does not save a person nor completes salvation in any way, shape of form, but is an answer to a good conscience. 1Pet. 3:19-21

- c. Water baptism symbolic typifies our death to the old Man and the New Man being raise in the power of the Holy Spirit. Rom. 6:3-4
2. Philip was caught away by the Spirit when they both came out of the water. vs. 39a-b
 - a. The word caught away is “harpozo” , which means a sudden or violent snatching away.
 - b. The word appears thirteen times in the New Testament and consistently it is used in this manner and often with a translation from one geographical location to another.
 - c. Three examples will do.
 - 1) The parable of the Sower, the seed by the wayside. Matt. 13:19
 - 2) The time when Paul was translated to heaven. 2Cor. 12:2
 - 3) The rapture of the church. 1Thess. 4:17
 3. The Ethiopian did not see Philip and he went on his way rejoicing. vs. 39c-d
 - a. The joy was over his salvation experience.
 - 1) His sins had been forgiven.
 - 2) He was one with God.
 - 3) He had a personal relationship with the living Savior.
 - 4) He had eternal life.

- * The same joy was experienced with the Samaritans. Acts 8:8
- b.** The contrast is incredible.
- 1) He had come to worship in the temple in the court of the Gentiles.
 - 2) He had come to the One who is greater than the temple.
 - 3) He had gone from a legal relationship of Law to one of acceptance through grace.

C. Philip continued to be used by God as an evangelist. vs. 40

1. He was found in Azotus after he was raptured away. vs. 40a
 - a.** Azotus is the old city of the Philistines of Ashdod.
 - b.** Azotus was about 20 miles north of Gaza, half way between the city of Joppa, the area of the modern day city of Tel-Aviv.
2. He passing through preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea. vs. 40b-c
 - a.** Philip preached to all the cities.
 - 1) The word preached “euggelizo” means to bring good news.
 - 2) The same word is used by the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist and the angels to the shepherds in the field. Lk. 1:19, 2:10

- b.** This is the privilege and responsibility of every believer, that is to be motivated by the love of God.
 - 1) God will use us always.
 - 2) God will settle our ministry as He sees fit.
 - 3) God will establish the character of our ministry through time.
3. He began as a waiter on tables. Acts. 6
 - a.** Serving in medial matters.
 - b.** Serving in the capacity of the Holy Spirit.
 - c.** Serving faithfully.
4. He preached to Samaria through persecution. Acts 8:1-8
 - a.** In obedience to the Great Commission.
 - b.** In passion for the lost.
 - c.** In no way partial or prejudice to race.
5. He had been obedient to leave the crowds and go to the one. Acts 8:4-25
 - a.** The snare is to crowd all in one place and to get caught up in the fever of the crowds.
 - b.** The challenge is to be ready to be used of God wherever He directs.
 - c.** The greatest work is not to be determined by the size or the popularity but the directed service of God to me.

6. He became known as Philip the evangelist. Acts 21:8
 - a. He was visited by Paul in Caesarea, on his way back to Jerusalem.
 - b. He is the only one to bear this title in the New Testament, though we see many who exercise the gift of evangelism.
 - c. He was promoted by the Lord not himself.

Illustration

Lady Hunington was a Christian well known to others during the time of the revival that swept England in the nineteenth century. She was once asked how she, one of the country's noble women, had been converted. She replied: "By one letter."

"How is that? By one letter?"

"Yes," she answered, "In God's Word, I Corinthians 1:26, it says: "Not many noble are called. That 'm' saved my soul; for if He had said, 'Not any noble,' I must have been damned. So God blessed the little letter 'm' before any to the salvation of my soul." #5426

Application

1. We must give an answer to everyone who asks who Jesus is, the Son of the living God, as Peter. Matt. 16:16

2. We must not be afraid to tell people what hinders them from Christ, their need of repentance. Acts 2:38
 3. We must make perfectly clear that salvation is complete in itself, based on the atoning work of Christ not plus water baptism. Col. 2:9-10
 4. We must offer Christ to those we preach to, as Peter did to Cornelius. Acts 10
 5. We will continue to be used if we are open to obey the leading of the Spirit and preach Jesus only, as a vessel of honor. 2Tim. 2:20-21
 6. We must recognize that effective ministry has nothing to do with us but with the leading of a man by God, the word of God and the illumination of the Holy Spirit! 2Cor. 4:7
- * "But we have this **treasure** in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

God used Philip to offer salvation to the Ethiopian eunuch!

Conclusion

The is how God saved the Ethiopian eunuch.

- I. God used Philip to reach out to the Ethiopian eunuch!
- II. God used Philip by the Spirit of God to illuminate the Ethiopian eunuch!
- III. God used Philip to offer salvation to the Ethiopian eunuch!