

STUDY GUIDE

for the week of 6/30 thru 7/5
Acts 8:26-40



WHATS THE STORY?

Along the road out of Jerusalem, Philip meets an Ethiopian Eunuch who is studying the scroll of Isaiah. After a conversation, the Eunuch asks what can keep him from being baptized into this new community. Philip's answer is to bring him to the water and baptize him into the church.

LECTIO DEVINA

Prepare: Find a calm and quiet place to read and absorb the passage.

Read: Read through the passage. Listen for any words or phrases that jump out and listen for what God has to say.

Reflect: Try to understand what God could be saying to you through this passage.

Respond: Journal or pray to God, communicating about what you think God was telling you through Scripture.

Rest: Spend time contemplating, allowing God to work.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think of when you hear the Kingdom of God?
- How might the Holy Spirit be acting in the world as it continues to build this Kingdom?



FAMILY STUDY

- Discuss:** How do others help us understand the Bible?
- Who led Philip to speak with the Ethiopian?
- Why did the Ethiopian decide to be baptized?

A Deeper Look

Throughout Acts 8, Philip is the one pushing the boundaries on who can receive the gospel. Luke introduced Philip earlier in the chapter when Simon the Sorcerer heard him preaching. It wasn't until after the other apostles heard that "Samaria had accepted the word of God" (8:14) that Peter and John went out to aid in the efforts. Philip is told now to go along the road south of Jerusalem to Gaza by "an Angel/Messenger of the Lord..." (8:26) He comes across a Eunuch from Ethiopia who who held the office of treasurer to the queen. The implication in this story is that the Ethiopian was a "God-fearer", a Gentile who worshiped the God of Israel. However, the law of the Torah would prevent him from being a full participant in the worship at the temple: "No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the Lord." (Duet. 23:1) And yet, in the prophet Isaiah, we read this: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever."

One could see this passage as being fulfilled here in Acts 8 by way of the the Holy Spirit's encouragement. The Holy Spirit instructed Philip to join the chariot. Continually, the Holy Spirit is breaking down barriers and expanding who is included in the Kingdom of God.

Upon learning that the Ethiopian is reading from the scroll of Isaiah (likely purchased on this journey to Jerusalem), Philip begins to explain the prophecies of the Suffering Servant. The Ethiopian asks Philip, "...who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" With this simple spring board, Philip introduces the Ethiopian to Jesus Christ. Perhaps reflecting on his previous denial of participation in temple worship, and his excitement about the gospel, the Ethiopian asks what would prevent him from being baptized, a question that Philip responds to with an implicit "nothing" as the Ethiopian is immersed into the church. As soon as this was accomplished, Philip was mysteriously taken away and the Ethiopian Eunuch began rejoicing as he traveled.