

The Ethiopian eunuch



The book of Acts tells a nice story which occurred shortly after many Christians were persecuted and dropout from Jerusalem¹, allowing the words of Jesus to be fulfilled: *'You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth'*.² The story also states clearly that God accepts all the people and that all of them can obtain salvation, regardless race, nationality or any other human barrier, because God loves all; fact that we can see in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.³ Among those who were dropout from Jerusalem was Philip, one of the first seven deacons chosen to serve the nascent church.⁴ The work of Philip in Samaria was very

successful⁵ and reached the ears of the apostles in Jerusalem.⁶ Because the message Christ gave to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well had produced good results.⁷ So when his disciples were dropout from Jerusalem, some found safe refuge in Samaria. The Samaritans welcomed these messengers of the Gospel and the converted Jewish gathered a precious harvest among those who had been their bitterest enemies.

While Philip was still in Samaria, a heavenly messenger asked him to go south on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.⁸ Philip obeyed and went, He did not question the call nor hesitated to obey, because he had learned to accept God's will. The text explains what happened next: *'On the way I saw an Ethiopian eunuch of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He controlled all their treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for worship, He was going back, seated in his carriage, and was reading the book of the prophet Isaiah and was now back in his car, reading the prophet Isaiah'*.⁹ This Ethiopian was a man of good standing and wide influence. Once converted he would give others the light received and would exert a powerful influence in favour of the gospel. The angels of God certainly attended this seeker for light attracted him to the Saviour.¹⁰ Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit; the Lord brought him in touch with someone who could lead him to a greater light. Philip was sent to find the Ethiopian and to explain him the prophecy he was reading. *'The Spirit said to Philip, approach him'*¹¹ Once near, Philip asked him: *'Do you understand what you are reading? And he said: And how can I understand if no one teaches me? And he invited Philip to get in the carriage and sit with him'*.¹²

The Ethiopian read Isaiah's prophecy concerning Christ, saying: *'As a sheep was lead to death, as a lamb before its shearers he shut up and do not open his mouth. He will suffer jail, trial and death; and who will tell his story if he is uprooted completely from the world of the living?'*¹³ The eunuch asked Philip, *'who is the prophet speaking about? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?'*¹⁴ Then Philip explained him the great truth of redemption. Starting from that passage of Scripture, he told him the good news, (the gospel in Greek) of Jesús.¹⁵ The Ethiopian's heart thrilled with interest as Philip explained the Scriptures, and when the disciple had finished speaking, the man was willing to accept the light given. He did not make his high worldly position as an excuse for refusing the gospel. After, when they arrived to a place with water he said, *'Is there anything that prevents me from being baptized?'* *'Philip said, if you believe with all your heart, you can be baptized. And the eunuch said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And the eunuch commanded the carriage to stop, and they both went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they left the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip and the eunuch never saw him again, but continued on his way full of joy. Meanwhile, Philip found himself in Ashdod, where he preached the gospel in all the cities, until he arrived to Caesarea'*.¹⁶



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This Ethiopian represents a large class of people who need to be taught by missionaries like Philip, that is, by men who hear the voice of God and go wherever he sends them. Many read the Scriptures without understanding its true meaning. Worldwide, there are men and women looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers, tears and questions flow from souls longing for light appealing for grace and willing to receive the Holy Spirit. Many of them are on the verge of the kingdom of God waiting only to belong to it.

Biblical References:

1. Acts 8: 1
2. Acts 1: 8
3. Deuteronomy 10: 17-19; II Chronicles 19: 7; Job 34: 19; Ephesians 6: 9
4. Acts 6: 3-6
5. Acts 8: 4-8
6. Acts 8: 14, 25
7. John 4: 6-8; 28-30, 39-42
8. Acts 8: 26, 27
9. Acts 8: 27, 28
10. Isaiah 56: 3-8
11. Acts 8: 29
12. Acts 8: 30, 31
13. Isaiah 53: 7, 8; Acts 8: 32, 33
14. Acts 8: 34
15. Acts 8: 35
16. Acts 8: 36-40