

=THE BOOK OF ACTS=
Lesson 8
Philip and the Eunuch - Acts 8

AIM: to teach my pupils the story of Philip and the eunuch.

POINT OF CONTACT: Review the main thing about each of the previous chapters. Now include this one under the title, "Philip and the Eunuch." Make such an impression upon the class that for all of their lives they will know what to find in the 8th chapter of Acts, as well as in each of the previous chapters. Ask them what is in chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3, etc. Then pick out certain of the things we have studied and ask them to tell in which chapter each is found. In other words, review the chapter main topics both ways.

This story is of Philip, a deacon, winning an Ethiopian eunuch to Christ. Philip had been preaching in Samaria, and for some strange reason, God led him down to the deserts of Gaza. It was there that he met the Ethiopian eunuch, who was reading from the Prophet Isaiah but could not understand it. Philip explained to him Jesus and salvation through Him; the eunuch got saved; then Philip baptized him; and the two of them went on their way rejoicing.

- I. THE SINNER. Notice Acts 8:26, 27. Of all the places where you would expect to find someone to lead to Christ, the least likely would be the desert. This simply teaches us there are people who can be won everywhere, if only we would win them. (Ask the class to tell you some people unsaved around them. See how many have unsaved ones in their homes. See how many have unsaved neighbors. See how many have unsaved relatives. See how many have unsaved schoolmates. See how many have unsaved people who are with them daily. Lead the class to realize how many unsaved people they come in contact with every day to whom they could witness.)

This particular sinner was a very important one. He was the treasurer of all of the riches of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians.

- II. THE SINCERITY. In Acts 8:27c, you will notice that he "had come to Jerusalem for to worship." Though he was not a Jew, and though he lived many, many miles—even hundreds of miles—from Jerusalem, he had been converted to the Jewish religion and had come to Jerusalem to worship. It was probably 500 miles or more from Ethiopia to Jerusalem. Think of coming this far by chariot. It would take him days and days. No doubt he was a very sincere and devout religious man. Still, he was not saved. If anything in the Bible teaches us that religion does not save, it would be this story. It does not matter how sincere one is; if he does not have faith in Jesus Christ, he is lost.

- III. THE SCRIPTURE. (Acts 8:28) No one can be saved apart from the Scripture. Just feeling good is not enough. Just an emotional experience is not enough. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Psalm 126:6 says, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed..." The seed must be planted; the Scripture must be used. Occasionally someone will say after a good testimony that perhaps the invitation should be given then instead of after the preaching of the Word. This may be true, but the person cannot be saved unless somewhere, at some time, the seed of Scripture has been planted. The most important thing about salvation is the knowledge of the plan. A person must know how to be saved. Stop here and let the class know exactly what it means to be saved. Show them that there are four things they must realize:

1. That they are sinners. (Romans 3:10, 23)
2. That the price on sin is eternal separation from God—Hell. See Matthew 25:41; Romans 5:12; 6:23; Revelation 14:11; 20:14, 15; 21:10.
3. That Jesus paid the price for our sins, suffering Hell for us. (Romans 5:8; II Corinthians 5:21)
4. That if we will receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we can be saved. Notice John 1:11, 12; 3:15, 16, 18, 36; 5:24; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:8, 9.

- IV. THE SPIRIT. (Acts 8:29) The Holy Spirit is certainly necessary in the salvation of a soul. All of the proper plans we use, all of the Scriptures we quote, and all of the methods we know must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is so easy for us to forget that the Bible is a spiritual book and cannot be understood except as directed by the Holy Spirit. Most false teachings arise from someone who studies the Bible carefully but is not led by the Holy Spirit. In conjunction with this, read I Corinthians 2:14.
- V. THE SOUL WINNER. (Acts 8:30, 31) Especially notice the words in verse 31, "...How can I, except some man should guide me?..." This plainly teaches that no one can be saved apart from human instrumentality. God has ordained that just the Scripture, just the Holy Spirit, etc. do not complete the necessary requirements for soul winning. There must be a human instrument. God has planned it this way. Here is a man who was reading the Scripture. Reading the Scripture is not enough. Someone should explain it. Oftentimes people who never witness with their mouth simply pass out Gospel tracts. This is not enough. A Gospel tract with a Gospel witness is good, but a Gospel tract as a substitute is not good. The Word of God by itself will not do the work. It must be accompanied by explanation. A soul winner is necessary. Far too many times human instrumentality is overlooked. So many people say that the Lord must do the work. This is true, the Lord must do the work; but the Lord does the work through people, through His Word, through the Holy Spirit, etc.
- VI. THE SAVIOUR. (Acts 8:32-35) Philip never told him to what denomination he belonged. He never mentioned his church. He did not tell him anything he had to do to be saved. He told him nothing about what he had to quit, what he had to join, what ritual he had to observe—he just preached unto him Jesus! Now let it be understood that if joining a church saved, this man could not have been saved in the desert. He had no opportunity to do good deeds. He simply needed Jesus. Let us be careful in our soul winning that we simply point men to Jesus Christ.
- VII. THE SYMBOL. (Acts 8:36-38) The man is now saved. What is the first thing he is to do? This is very plainly taught in these verses. The first thing to do is to be baptized. The qualifications for baptism are outlined here so simply. There are those who would say that a person must be tested before he is baptized, that he must wait for a proving period before he is baptized. You will notice here in verse 36c, however, the question came very simply, "...what doth hinder me to be baptized?" In verse 37, Philip gave the only true prerequisite, and this is believing "with all thine heart." Consequently, he was baptized immediately. Now someone will say, "Yes, this is true in the United States, but on the mission field you have to be more careful. You don't know the people. They are of different races and different backgrounds." That was exactly the case here. Philip was a Jew; the convert was an Ethiopian eunuch. Their backgrounds were different, but the Bible and God's plan are the same for all people. Consequently, he was baptized the same day. People often comment upon visiting First Baptist Church that they wonder why we baptize people immediately. The answer is very simple: That is the Bible plan!

It is interesting to note that they both went down into the water. This could not be anything but immersion. Some advised that they went down into the water and that Philip then sprinkled him. How absurd! Why would they go down into the water to sprinkle? Why not bring some of the water up in a container? The truth is, the word "baptize" means "immerse."

- VIII. THE SATISFACTION. (Acts 8:39, 40) Someone has said that in verse 39, when it says, "...he went on his way rejoicing," this pertains to the eunuch who was a new convert. Still others say this pertains to Philip who was happy because he had won a soul. Let us say it pertains to both of them. They both were happy. Soul-winning Christians are happy people. Newly-won converts are happy people. Soul-winning churches are happy churches. May we catch the glimpse of winning souls and always be on the lookout for unsaved people.