

Acts 8.26-40

God uses 4 'Wrongs' to Do Right

Modern Church > Strategy & Technology > Get it Right – Figure it Out

Many Focus on Technique – As IF Decisions determine Church Growth

Text > Mission of Church of God Way OUT of Control > ...seems that....

Wrong Leader sent to Wrong Person in Wrong Place at Wrong Time

**1. A Door Shut**      **2. A Highway Opened**

v. 27 He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning...

Been to Temple, Sought GOD of ISRAEL > Going Home ESTRANGED

QUESTIONS are NOT ANSWERED > SEARCH is NOT SUCCESSFUL

Today: People Visit Churches > LEAVE w/out FINDING ANSWERS

Reason Hope we get Prayer Cards Out and Prayed For Each Week

a. Lots of Rules > NOT have found Warm WELCOME in Jerusalem

v. 27 an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure

'ETHIOPIA' Today Land AREA: SUDAN, and Eritrea, and Ethiopia

To GREEKS & ROMANS > ETHIOPIA was ENDS of the EARTH

Ethiopians...lived at the world's end

Homer

CANDACE = TITLE > NUBIAN word for QUEEN MOTHER

In ancient Ethiopia...kings were descendants of gods...too holy to be charged with taking care of the business of the empire. The king reigned, but he did not rule...the business of the empire was put into the hands of the queen mother... given the title or name Candace. R.C. Sproul

Eunuch> Title of Importance > COUNSELOR, ADVISOR to Royalty

Important Official > Traveled 50/60 LONG, Difficult, DAYS to Jerusalem

Judaism of Jesus Day > Hopelessly Legalistic > Zealous on Details

NOT a EUNUCH-FRIENDLY Religious Environment

No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the LORD.  
Deuteronomy 23.1

Eunuch NOT A JEW – thus NOT ALLOWED to become CONVERT

Nothing this Ethiopian do to Qualify for Full Standing in Judaism

## b. Lousy Relationships

Church People often Make Friends w/ People Just like Themselves

Membership Class > Not Sure if wanna join IF People Don't Like

'A Friendly Church' = Friendly to People LIKE THEMSELVES

Hebrew Scripture: Strange, Foreign Ethiopian / AKA 'CUSH'

Cush...a people tall and smooth-skinned...a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech  
Isaiah 18.1,2

Ethiopia > Beyond BORDERS of ROMAN Empire > 'ends of the earth'

Could NOT Draw Near to GOD > NO SACRIFICE, NO SALVATION

Let those who have made themselves eunuchs be had in detestation... avoid any conversation with them who have deprived themselves of their manhood...let such be driven away...their soul has become effeminate...of a monstrous nature  
Josephus – Jewish Historian

Despite his position of royal power at home, the Ethiopian was doubly excluded – by race and by physical defect – from the worshipping community of Israel.  
Dennis Johnson

## 2. A Highway Opened

a. Willing Servant Needs Everywhere > Do We NOTICE Them?

Luke: Master STORY-TELLER > Weaves People, Places, Events

ACTS: Wide Arms of God's Love: Jerus, Judea, Samaria, Ends of Earth

Philip > Faithful Reflection of God he FOLLOWS and SERVES

BARRIER BREAKER > Preaching to Samaritans and Ethiopians

Used by God in MASS Evang. / & Now PERSONAL Witness

Hellenists: Jews from GREEK Culture > God uses to PUSH Out Church

Stephen: Theology of Mission // Philip: Methodology of Mission

Outbreak of New Life in Samaria > Philip seems INDISPENSABLE

@ Moment of Great NEED & OPPORTUNITY > Called AWAY

vs. 26 Angel of the Lord: Philip, "Rise & go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza...desert place... he rose & went

Wrong Time – Riding Crest of Wave of Revival in Samaria!

Wrong Leader – Gifted Evangelist, Cross-Cultural Insights for Samaria

Wrong Place – DESERT? – Go See ONE Guy in Big Lonely Desert!

Wrong Person – Eunuch: AVOID like Covid CARRIER/ No Followers!

FAITH > God KNOWS BEST > Sees BIG Picture – Sees IN Hearts

Whenever it comes to a choice between our way of thinking and what God says, you know as well as I do that there is no real choice. We must do what God says. If you read the Bible and what you read does not seem to make sense to you but you understand what it is telling you to do, well, you had better do it. That is the only way you or anybody else will find blessing.

James Boice

vs. 39,40 when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away...But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea

Gk. ‘Snatched’ = Raptured / Supersonic Ride at Miraculous Velocity??

MAYBE – Or perhaps Ethiopian Did NOT see Philip AGAIN

Leading of God by Angel of Lord & SPIRIT of God

God made Philip READY for ANYTHING, ANYONE, ANYTIME

Good EXAMPLE for US > Ready to Give Answer for HOPE in Him

We must offer them Christ!

John Wesley

Knew Arguments, Excuses, and Nature of his Sheep!

MAY God help US to Share Good News of Jesus with Others

Do you have anyone you want to Keep OUT of HELL?

b. Words of Scripture

Eunuch NOT Find God in Jerusalem: Found God’s Book=Prophet Isaiah

Scroll of Scripture > Very COSTLY & RARE Treasure: Not on Phone

Only last 400 yrs people had PERSONAL Copies of the Bible

Discovering WORTH? POWER? BY Questioning – Reading – Searching

v. 29 the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet...

THEN Reading ALOUD/ Greek Text No Space btwn Words or Punct.

Was Eunuch Reading Aloud? > Perhaps a Servant Reading?

Spirit prompted Philip to Bold INTERRUPTION...

1) Promises > God has a PLAN for ALL PEOPLES, even ETHIOPIA  
CUSH = Ancient NAME for ETHIOPIA

...for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious... from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, *from Upper Egypt, from Cush...* *He will raise a banner for the nations... There will be a highway for the remnant of his people*  
Isaiah 11.9-16

2) Fulfillment – Prophecy of Isaiah THEN over 700 years OLD

v. 32-34 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth... the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

First-century Jews did not interpret the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 as a prophecy about the coming Messiah.  
Clinton Arnold

Spirit of God INSPIRED Word, guides Philip to Rightly INTERPRET...

v. 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in X!

Holy Spirit pitched Philip EASY SOFTBALL to drill for HOME RUN

GREAT TEXT to PREACH JESUS > Suffering Servant, Victorious Lamb

God PREPARED that Moment for Audience of ONE > To Find HIM!

In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God...And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it .  
Isaiah 40.3,5

House of PRAYER for ALL NATIONS > NOT in Jerusalem > In Jesus!

NOW in JESUS > Ethiopian Eunuch CITIZEN in ZION

3) Teaching vs. 30,31 “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

This Ethiopian represents many people today who are religious, read the Scriptures, and seek the truth, yet do not have saving faith in Jesus Christ. They are sincere, but they are lost! They need someone to show them the way. Warren Wiersbe

a) Human Teachers are Helpful > *Given by God to Church*

God Could have sent ANGEL to Ethiopian > DIRECT Revelation

Instead He Sent a Gifted TEACHER > FILLED with SPIRIT of GOD

Philip the Evangelist	to Samaritans	to Ethiopian
Message: Good News of Jesus	v. 12 Philip...preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ	v. 35 Philip... told him the good news about Jesus.
Response: Faith demonstrated by Baptism	v. 12 when they believed... they were baptized, both men and women.	vs. 36,38 the eunuch said, "Why shouldn't I be baptized?" ... Philip baptized him.
Result: Joy	v. 8 So there was great joy in that city.	v. 39 the eunuch...went on his way rejoicing.

From the 'Message of Acts' by John Stott

b) Divine Teacher is Essential > *Holy Spirit given to Every Believer*

Human Teachers of Scriptures > HELPFUL but NOT ESSENTIAL

IF Teacher SAYS they're Essential, Only Way to Truth > Run FAST!

Only Essential KEY to Scripture > Knowing the DIVINE AUTHOR

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. Psalm 119.18

c. Witness of the Savior

Philip must have told the Ethiopian about Baptism of Believers

Eunuch Wants to FOLLOW STEP of OBEDIENCE, FAITH

Philip Not Send Memo to HQTRS in Jerusalem! > **WELCOME!!**

Eunuch NOT become JEW: Welcomed fully to Family of JESUS

vs. 36,38 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Accuracy & Truthfulness of Bible – What is SAYS & NOT Say

SAYS – Words of Isaiah 700 yrs before Xmas – Accurate, Complete

Delete v. 37 SCRIBAL Gloss to teach Important Point – Not in Bible

v. 37 Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. KJV

Baptismal VOW > Baptism of first Gentile Believer

Acts: Baptism Important, Immediate/ Sign of Believer's Commitment

Need to Organize a BAPTISM here at Kalahikiola!

v. 39 and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing

REJOICING > Luke's Word for EVIDENCE of HOLY SPIRIT in LIFE

WHAT Happened to that Ethiopian?? Never Mentioned Again in Bible

Expect to Meet Him in Heaven > WILL HEAR his Testimony

1<sup>st</sup> NON-Jew to BELIEVE & be BAPTIZED was a BLACK AFRICAN

Jesus SAVED him > Philip served important AUDIENCE of ONE

Then he AUDIENCE w/ Queen CANDACE > Kingdom of Ethiopia

LIGHT of JESUS in DARK CORRIDORS of PAGAN KINGDOM

Philip > Evangelist > Cities of Samaritans / African in Remote Desert

Different Methods – Same ETERNAL MESSAGE of GOOD NEWS

APOSTLE to GENTILES > GOOD NEWS for those ONCE FAR OFF...

For he (Jesus) himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

Ephesians 2.14-17

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Acts 8.<sup>26</sup>Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. <sup>27</sup>And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup>and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup>And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup>Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." <sup>34</sup>And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" <sup>35</sup>Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" <sup>38</sup>And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup>And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>But Philip found

himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

### Congregational Prayer

God, as we look down the corridors of time, we worship You as the Lord of Eternity. You reached into a lonely desert and drew the first Gentile to Yourself. You fulfilled the prophecy to Isaiah, "Let not any eunuch complain, "I am only a dry tree." For this is what the LORD says: "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 not be cut off. And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him...these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer...for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56.3-7). Help us, dear Lord, to see your saving power in our day, in ways beyond we could think or imagine. Forgive us for our unbelief. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for bringing us into your House for all Nations where Jesus is Lord. Renew our faith, O God.

### Ask God to Show you How to Serve Him Best in 2024

"In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God...And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it" (Isaiah 40.3,5). Lord Jesus, we believe You are the Way-Maker. You came to earth as a man. You faced the demons and temptations of earth and triumphed over them. You drank the cup of God's wrath down to the dregs as you suffered on the cross. Then you rose, never to die again! "Who can believe that death can be the cause of life? But in God's wonderful wisdom hell became a ladder which Christ ascended to heaven, so that his reproach would become a way of life for him, and the joyful brightness of salvation would appear out of the horror and darkness of the cross" (John Calvin). Send us forth in your saving power, Lord Jesus, to share this Great News. Here we are, Risen Lord, send us! Amen.