

Unit 31, Session 4: The Church Spread Out

Big Picture Question: Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:5 – He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Christ Connection: The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the Ethiopian official understand the good news about Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead, just like the Old Testament prophets said.

Bible Passage: Acts 8:26-40

Find the passages together in your Bibles and read through them together. You could also read the paraphrase of all these passages below in blue. For younger kids, you may want to just read the bolded portions.

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 displays God's gracious salvation to all who seek him, even Gentiles. As Philip obediently engages with the Ethiopian man the Spirit brought him to, he hears the man reading from the scroll of Isaiah. The passage is from the song of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53:7-8. The man invites Philip to explain the meaning of the passage, which presents an opportunity to tell about Jesus Christ, the very suffering servant the song describes. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 paints a picture of the kind of man who would pay the price for humanity's sin. He would not be what anyone expected, and he would suffer everything that we deserve. By God's grace, knowledge, and will, Christ would pour out his soul to death and bear the sins of many to make intercession for our transgressions (53:12). The salvific work of the Lord was not limited to the biological descendants of Abraham, however.

People from all nations were intended to receive this wonderful gift, even eunuchs, who had previously been banned from participating in temple worship (Lev 21:17-22; Deut 23:1). Just a few passages later in the scroll of Isaiah, the Lord declares salvation and welcome to all who had once been excluded from the Lord's assembly, including foreigners and eunuchs: "For thus says the Lord: 'To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off'" (Is 56:4-5). The song of salvation was for this man Philip met on the road. The song of salvation is for each foreigner who will "love the name of the Lord and be his servant" (56:6). The Lord understand what it is to be an outcast (53:3-4), and it is to the outcasts that he offers a place in his house (56:7). It is no wonder that the Ethiopian man would choose immediate belief and baptism, for the good news of Jesus was meant for him, and for all who would believe!

An angel of the Lord told Philip, a follower of Jesus, to go to a desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza. So Philip went.

On the road was a man from Ethiopia. He was an important official to the queen of Ethiopia. **The man had come to worship in Jerusalem,** and now he was on his way home. **He sat in his chariot, reading aloud the words of the prophet Isaiah.**

The Holy Spirit told Philip to go to the chariot, so Philip ran up to it. **“Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked the man.**

The official replied, “How can I, unless someone explains it to me?” He invited Philip into his chariot, and Philip sat with him. **The official was reading these; is silent before it; shearer, so He does not open His mouth. He was treated unfairly, and His life is taken away.”**

The official asked, “Was Isaiah talking about himself or someone else?” **Isaiah was talking about the Messiah, so Philip began to tell the man the good news about Jesus,** beginning with the words they had just read together.

As they traveled down the road, they came to some water. “What would keep me from being baptized?” the official asked.

Then the official told the chariot to stop. He and Philip went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit took Philip away to another town, where he continued to travel and preach the gospel. The official went home, and he was very happy.

If you or your child have questions about what it looks like to follow Jesus in salvation or baptism, Pastor Sam would love to talk with you! Please feel free to contact him at ssievers@lenexabaptist.com.