



Acts: The Ethiopian Eunuch

March 15

INTRODUCTION: Acts: *Jesus' work, through the Apostles and disciples, by the Holy Spirit, to fulfil Acts 1:8.* Dispersed from Jerusalem this chapter now grows the reach of the mission of the Church.

KEY POINT: principles for mission, baptism

A.M. SERMON RECAP (Acts 7:60–8:3)

- How is there a transition here (Acts 1:8)?
- What have you learned from Acts 1–7?
- How did martyrdom=persecution=dispersion=mission?
- What striking contrasts are found in this passage?
- What does it teach the Church today?

P.M. SERMON RECAP (Acts 8:4–25)

- Why were the Samaritans despised by Jews?
- Is there any modern mission parallel to the Samaritans?
- Big questions:
 - Was Simon saved?
 - Does this passage teach a two stage or one stage Christianity? How might we best describe the Apostles' visit?
- What does this passage teach us about evangelism and mission?

READ: Acts 8:26–40

QUESTIONS:

1. *The effect of persecution was dispersion and greater Gospel reach. This story takes place in the hinterlands of Judea and Samaria.*
2. *First an angel and later the Spirit. Phillip now receives another evangelistic mission, "Go to the middle of no-where." The only notable aspect of this area is the highway down to Egypt.*
3. **V. 26- How does God often choose/use "desert places" (unlikely places of mission) to accomplish His great saving purposes? (Mt 22:9).**

4. *V. 26- Showing faithful obedience Stephen didn't question. How did the Holy Spirit guide Phillip in his evangelism (generally and specifically)? How does he guide us today? **How can we resist the Lord's evangelistic promptings?***
5. *V. 27- Lo and behold, in this desert place there was travelling back to Africa an Ethiopian eunuch. There are three types of Eunuchs (Mt 19:10–12). Eunuchs often held trusted positions at Court as a result of their castration. Ethiopia (Nubia) was the Upper Nile region south of Egypt.*
6. *V. 27b- How did an Ethiopian come to be a worshipper? (Since Cornelius is the first Gentile/non-Jew/unbeliever, worshipper probably means he was a proselyte to Judaism va. a god-fearer. This may have happened through the dispersion (e.g. Alexandria in Egypt) or perhaps through the Queen of Sheba, or Saba (modern Yemen), which at times was part of the Ethiopian Kingdom (1 Ki 10).*
7. **V. 28- We often can be tempted to think people aren't thinking about spiritual matters, that our evangelism might be an imposition. How does this passage and experience counter this?**
8. *V. 28–29- People at this time read aloud. How did drawing near the Ethiopian help Phillip? How can learning more of those we share the Gospel with aid our mission?*
9. *v. 31- How is an openness of heart a sign of the Spirit's work? **Why do unbelievers need guidance in discipleship?** If done humbly why is knowing you are a guide not presumptuous?*
10. *The Lord blesses us with Scripture, teachers and the Spirit or Teacher.*
11. *V. 30- Isaiah 53, a Messianic prophecy. Isaiah is known as the 5th Gospel and has much to say about the Gentiles, including Eunuchs (Isa 56:3–5).*
12. *Unlike Samaria, there is no sign but an encounter with God's Word. **How is this just as miraculous an encounter?***
13. **V. 35- How is this a great example of meeting the person where they are but immediately moving them toward the Gospel?**
14. **How can any question be the spring board to the Gospel?**

15. **V. 36- How is baptism so closely linked to the Gospel?**
16. *Providentially, water in the desert; Gaza, the last watering place on the road to Egypt.*
17. **How is this a prime example of believer's (subject) baptism by immersion (mode) in the Scriptures?**
18. Should the speed of baptism always be this quick?
19. *V. 37- read or see footnote that some manuscripts add this. If true, how does it contrast with Simon (v. 21b) and instruct us to be discerning in whom we baptize?*
20. **C.f. v. 8 and v. 39. What effect does believing the Gospel have?**
21. *A new mission had begun. Though Ethiopia converted to Christianity in the mid-300s, the Eunuch is traditionally seen as the beginnings of Christianity in Ethiopia.*
22. *Vv. 24 and 40- Why bother preaching (Ro 10:17)? How does evangelism encourage, inspire and equip us for further ministry?*
23. *Philip seems to have settled at Caesarea (Acts 21:8).*
24. **Consider the people Phillip evangelized (Samaritans and the Ethiopian). What similarities and differences were there? What does it teach us that he preached the same Gospel to them?**
25. **Consider the method of evangelism between them: mass and personal; adaptability to method, same message; change and changelessness.**
26. How can we see God's providence in this passage?

NEXT: March 22-Acts 9:1-19, The Conversion of Saul