

**Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church of Beaumont**  
**Pastor: Pastor Dwight Benoit**  
**Superintendent: Ordained Minister Samuel O. Simon**  
**Lesson # 12 May 16, 2023---May 21, 2023**  
**Lesson Taught By Sis. Bettye Ardoin, Sis. Antonia Jones,**  
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**Unit III: The Birth of the Church**

**Subject: Breaking Down Barriers**

**Scripture Text: Acts 8:29-40**

**Key Verse: [The eunuch] gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Phillip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptize him (Acts 8:38, NIV)**

**Introduction:**

In Acts chapters 6 and chapter 7: Stephen was one of the first to preach the gospel outside of Jerusalem and was stoned to death for proclaiming the gospel of Christ. But his death was not in vain. Chapter 8 is about divine affirmative action. Verse 1—Say on that day (following the martyrdom of Stephen) a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem and Jesus followers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Persecution forced the believers to leave their homes-- their comfort zone in Jerusalem. But they took the gospel of Jesus with them, Preaching, teaching, and expanding the community of faith. In our lesson today, Acts 8:29-40: God used Phillip to expand the community of faith to include Ethiopian descendants. Ethiopia was located in Africa, south of Egypt and known as Cush in ancient days. This un-named Ethiopian was a eunuch, one that had been castrated either by choice or involuntarily to perform a specific duty. This eunuch was a high-ranking officer; he was the Minister of Finance for the Queen's treasury. The fact that he was a eunuch, and Black Ethiopian was more important than his position of wealth—because God used Phillip, a Jewish Christian to cross cultural barriers.

**Lesson Pointer #1**

- **A prepared Preacher” (Acts 8: 29-35, (KJV)**

**Acts 8: 26-27---Phillip received his first divine directive: the angel of the Lord directed Phillip to leave Samaria and go south to the road leading to Gaza—Phillip obeyed**  
**Acts 8: 29—Phillip received his second “Divine Directive” to go to the chariot and stay near. Phillip understood that if God direct us to do something he has a greater purpose.**  
**Acts 8: 30—Says Phillip did not tarry, he ran. When God opens the door for us to witness—don't hesitate. The Spirit of the Lord had prepared Phillip to share the gospel and He (the Holy Spirit) also prepared the eunuch heart to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. How many times have we missed opportunities to win others to Christ? Do we shy away from speaking boldly about Jesus? Phillip heard the Ethiopian reading Esaias, from the oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Phillip out of genuine concern asked if he understood what he was reading? Acts 8:31-34—The Ethiopian responded with a question. How can I except some man should guide me? After acknowledging he needed clarity, he invited Phillip to join him in the chariot. God orchestrated this meeting from the beginning, and he still need, willing laborers in the field. John 4:35c (NIV)—Jesus said, “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the field. They are ripe for harvest.” Look around,**

people are ready to hear God's word. And when God opens the door—be prepared to share the gospel. Acts 8:32-33 reference Isaiah 53:7-8.

Acts 8:35—says Philip began with these two scriptures and preached the gospel to a hungry soul—Philip was prepared and knowledgeable enough to rightly divide the word of truth, “BE PREPARED.” Philip met the eunuch on his level of understanding. Very likely Philip went on to cover the rest of Isaiah 53, along with other passages that foretold the coming of the Messiah. He told him who Jesus is: The perfect Spotless Lamb of God. (Isaiah 53: 3-7) What Jesus Did: Though perfectly innocent, our Lord died as a criminal for the transgressions of His people and was buried in a rich Man's tomb, (Isaiah 53: 8-9).

Why: He carry out the will of His Father by being obedient until death.

After preaching, Philip extended the invitation: With His resurrection from the grave and ascension into heaven, Our Lord Saves and justifies all who come to Him in faith by bearing their inequities upon Himself. (Isaiah 53: 10-12) OURS TO EXTEND, YOURS TO ACCEPT.

## Lesson Pointer # 2

- A Prepared Heart” (Act 8: 36--40, KJV)

Acts 8: 36-- As Philip and the eunuch traveled along the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinder me from being baptized?” The Ethiopian himself was ready to respond to the gospel. This was the work of the Holy Spirit, not a tribute to Philip's salesmanship. The Spirit of the Lord had been preparing the eunuch heart to receive the gospel. Jesus Christ must be the subject and focus of any presentation of the message of Salvation. The Ethiopian wants and ask to be baptized. This shows the eunuch did in fact believe, and that he wanted to be baptized to declare his belief and his faith in Jesus Christ's, death, burial, and resurrection. I am almost sure Phillip, told the eunuch about God raising Jesus on the third day. The Holy Spirit prepared his heart to see the truth of God. Maybe Philip even ended his explanation of the gospel with an appeal for baptism like Peter did at Pentecost: (Acts 2:38)—Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sin. Why Baptize? Christian baptism is one of two ordinances (Baptism and The Lord Supper), that Jesus instituted for the church. Very simply, baptism is an outward testimony of the inward change in a believer's life. Acts 8: 37—And Philip said, “If thou believe with all thy heart, thou mayest.” Philip insisted that the Ethiopian believe with all his heart before being baptize. This describes how we should respond to the gospel: Believe with all your heart. The devil himself has faith in his head, but he hates the truth in his heart. God wants His truth not only in our heads, but also in our heart. The Ethiopian responded, “I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.” This confession is the essential belief for anyone who will come to God. We must believe in the person of Jesus, in all that He is and has done as Christ. We must believe that He is the Son of God sent from the Father to accomplish the salvation of all those who will believe with all their hearts. The Ethiopian became a believer. When the Ethiopian said “Jesus Christ,” he confessed that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ). He agreed with his mind and heart that Jesus is the sin-bearing servant that Isaiah described, and Jesus fulfilled. Acts 8: 38-- The phrase, “Went down into,” the water: implies that the baptism was done by immersion. English dictionary defines, “down into” used to indicate movement from a higher to a lower position. Jesus Himself was baptized this way, (Mark 1:9-10) Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water.

**Note: It is faith that saves the believer from the penalty of sin, and gives them a new birth (Romans 4:3, John 3:14-16}. Baptism does not save from sin. Rather, it is done to declare and illustrate the newly resurrected life of a believer, which we receive by faith in His Son. (Ephesians 2:8-9). The believer is declaring, “I want to walk in the way of life instead of the way of death.” Acts 8: 39—Immediately after the eunuch baptism, the Holy Spirit suddenly and miraculously took Philip away and the eunuch did not see him again. The eunuch continued his journey home rejoicing that he received the Holy Spirit. I am sure the eunuch went home and told everybody about, The Gospel of, “Jesus Christ,” He was rejoicing just couldn’t keep to himself. Acts 8: 40--- Philip was given a new evangelistic assignment. He was transported to another location, sent by God to continue preaching the good news. He found himself at Azotus, formerly a Philistine city. As he passed through Azotus, he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities, until he came to Caesarea. Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch is significant because he was neither a Jew nor Samaritan but a GENTILE, African worshiper of God. By evangelizing him, God (by way of Philip) prove that the divine plan of redemption is for ALL HUMANITY ----regardless of race, ethnicity, or social standing. In Jesus Christ, all barriers are broken down, and Jesus invites “whosoever will” to come, and be a part of His kingdom.**