

## An Ethiopian Is Baptized

Zyaire's pastor's voice had receded to the background of this mind. He was focused on his shortcomings. Pastor Coleman had called the men together to go out and witness Christ in the church's neighborhood. They had been divided into groups of twos and Zyaire was paired with Rashard, whom he knew a little bit.

"I'll just let you do the talking," Zyaire said as they made their way on their route.

"Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and let Him guide you," answered Rashard. "God has worked in your life, and you have valuable things to share."

During their canvassing, Zyaire and Rashard greeted a man in his driveway washing a 1975 Ford Mustang.

The two men ended up standing around the vehicle, introducing themselves to the man whose name was Demont. Zyaire and Demont exchanged vintage car talk for a while. Demont said he wanted to sell the classic car but was having trouble getting it in topnotch running order.

Zyaire felt it was the time to turn the conversation but didn't know quite how.

"I'm glad we don't have to get ourselves fixed up first," offered Zyaire. "We are priceless to God just as we are."

"Man, I don't know," Demont said. "I may look good on the outside, like this Mustang, but I've got a big mess going on inside."

"It's nothing God doesn't already know," Zyaire said. "The Lord loves you, and He is the great mechanic."

**1.** *In what ways has the Holy Spirit helped you in your life?*

**2.** *Why do we need to depend on the Spirit?*

**3.** *How could the Holy Spirit help you share the Gospel?*

## Led by the Spirit

*Acts 8:29-31, KJV*

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou rearest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

*Acts 8:29-31, NIV*

<sup>29</sup>The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

<sup>30</sup>Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

<sup>31</sup>"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Having preached in Samaria with good success, Philip was instructed by the Spirit to head south past Jerusalem to the road to Gaza. When Philip arrived on the road he observed a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch, the treasurer to the Ethiopian queen, sitting in his chariot and reading out loud, as was typical practice, from the Book of Isaiah. He had gone "to Jerusalem to worship" and was "on his way home" (vss. 26-28).

After Philip approached the eunuch, he asked if the man understood what he was reading; the queen's treasurer indicated that he could not unless someone explained it to him. With that acknowledgement, the man invited Philip to join him in the chariot to provide the needed explanation. Philip promptly accepted the invitation.

**4.** *After arriving on the road to Gaza and observing the Ethiopian in his chariot, what further instructions did Philip receive from the Holy Spirit?*

**5.** *Upon complying with the Spirit's instructions, what did Philip hear and then ask?*

**6.** *How did the queen's treasurer respond to Philip's question?*

## Enlightened by the Spirit

*Acts 8:32-35, KJV*

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

*Acts 8:32-35, NIV*

<sup>32</sup>This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,  
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup>In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” <sup>35</sup>Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

Having joined the official in the chariot, Philip saw the Scripture passage was from Isaiah, specifically Isaiah 53:7-8 (with some differences because the Ethiopian was reading from the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament). This was a divine appointment between these two men—the Ethiopian was led by the Holy Spirit to read one of the clearest Messianic prophecies in the entire Old Testament. The man then asked Philip to whom was the prophet referring, himself or some other person? This gave the evangelist the blessed opportunity to help the man understand that the prophecy was about the suffering and exalted Messiah, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. It is from that very passage of Scripture that Philip began to tell the man about Jesus and the way of salvation from sin.

Since the text says that Philip “began” (vs. 35) with these two verses from Isaiah, it is very likely that he went on to cover the rest of Isaiah 53, along with other passages that foretold the Messiah. Like a spotless lamb, the Messiah was led to the slaughter as the perfect sacrifice for sin (Isa. 53:3-7). Though perfectly innocent, our Lord died as a criminal for the transgressions of His people and was buried in a rich man’s tomb (vss. 8-9). By His obedience unto death, Jesus carried out the will of His heavenly Father. Therefore, 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 iniquities upon Himself (vss. 10-12).

**7.** *From which passage of Scripture was the Ethiopian reading?*

**8.** *What question did the Ethiopian ask Philip?*

**9.** *How did Philip respond?*

## Rejoicing in the Spirit

*Acts 8:36-40, KJV*

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And 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.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up

*Acts 8:36-40, NIV*

<sup>36</sup>As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?”

<sup>38</sup>And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

<sup>39</sup>When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but

out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Whether stated explicitly as in the KJV (vs. 37), or implicit as in the NIV, the context of the passage shows the Ethiopian understood Philip's explanation of who Jesus is from Isaiah and any other Old Testament passages Philip used. And based on that understanding and the leading of the Spirit, the treasurer trusted the Lord for forgiveness of sins. Furthermore, he had an understanding of the concept of baptism, perhaps from personal observation while worshiping in Jerusalem, or from Philip's teaching, or some combination of the two. Therefore, when they approached a body of water, the man indicated that he wanted to be baptized.

After commanding the chariot to stop, the Ethiopian and Philip went down into the water, and Philip baptized him there. And when they came out of the water, Philip's work was finished, so the Spirit of God took the evangelist away for work elsewhere. Though he would not see his benefactor again, the Ethiopian's joy was not abated in the least, for our passage says that he continued on his way rejoicing. The Ethiopian's newly found faith in Christ was a great source of joy for him as he traveled back to his homeland.

**10.** *As they were approaching some water, what did the Ethiopian ask Philip?*

**11.** *What happened after the Ethiopian official gave the command to stop the chariot?*

**12.** *What was the Ethiopian's heart condition after continuing on his way?*

## Our Friend, the Holy Spirit

We have been commissioned by God to share the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the world. We have the Spirit's help when we share the Good News (see Mark 13:11). We can trust the Holy Spirit to do what Scripture says He will always do:

-The Holy Spirit teaches. He teaches the ways and thoughts of God. He knows all and sees all. Psalm 143:10 confirms, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground."

-The Holy Spirit guides. He knows which way to go and not to go. He leads and guides to all truth and righteousness. "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever" (John 14:16).

-The Holy Spirit comforts. He comforts the broken and those suffering and in pain. The Spirit reminds what God said. As John 14:26 says, "But the Advocate, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

-The Holy Spirit intercedes. He prays for us and champions our success. "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Rom. 8:26-27).

If we are to help lost souls find Christ, we must depend on the Spirit.

**13.** *What comfort do you have knowing the Spirit is always with us?*

**14.** *Why would we be reluctant to share the Gospel when we have the Spirit to help and guide us?*

**15.** *When is the Spirit available to help us share the Good News?*

## Say 'Yes!'

The Holy Spirit will let you know the will of God. He will let you know the plans and purposes of God. Be open to His leading and guidance. You will be surprised who He leads and guides you to share the Good News with. Someone is waiting for your obedience and your “yes” to the leading of God.

► *Write a big “Yes!” and sign your name in the space below to let the Holy Spirit know that you are ready for Him to guide you to someone who needs to know Jesus and you will depend on His help in sharing the Good News.*

### KEY VERSE

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. —Acts 8:38, KJV

And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. —Acts 8:38, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

#### Week of May 22 through May 28

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Psalm 19—The Heavens Tell God's Glory.
- Tues.** Galatians 1:10-24—Responding to the Gospel.
- Wed.** Philippians 3:1-14—Only Christ Matters.
- Thurs.** Philippians 3:15-21—Our Citizenship Is in Heaven.
- Fri.** Acts 9:1-9—Blinded by the Light.
- Sat.** Acts 9:10-22—Saul Preaches Jesus.
- Sun.** Acts 9:23-31—Saul Escapes to Jerusalem.