

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 31

Philip shares the gospel with the Ethiopian
Acts 8:26–40

**DAY 1**

Philip obeyed the Spirit • Acts 8:26–30

READ 

Acts 8:26–40

EXPLAIN **The truth of Acts 8:26–30**

Philip had been north of Jerusalem, but now an angel commanded him to go south. That was a strange command. Why should Philip leave what he began in Samaria? Why should he go by the less traveled road through dry hills instead of the more common one along the sea? But the strangeness of the command did not stop Philip. He got up and went. It's a good thing he obeyed, because an unexpected person was there: an Ethiopian official. But this wasn't just any Ethiopian. He was the Secretary of the Treasury, in charge of all the finances. More importantly, he was sincerely seeking God. He had purchased a scroll of Isaiah, and he happened to be reading it right then. Philip didn't yet know who this man was or what he was reading. But again, the Spirit guided him, and Philip fully obeyed. This shows that the work of bringing people to Jesus is, first, a work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit begins the work and sees it through to the end (John 3:3; 16:7–14). Second, it is the work of servants who obey the Spirit.

ASK 

1. Who told Philip to go south?
An angel of the Lord.
2. What was strange about the place where Philip was sent?
It was on the other side of Jerusalem from where Philip was. It was a less-used road.
3. Did Philip obey?
Yes.
4. Who did Philip find?
An important Ethiopian who was seeking God.

DISCUSS 

1. To what mission field have you been called?
2. How does God answer people who sincerely seek Him (Jer 29:13; Matt 7:7)?

DAY 2

Philip proclaimed Jesus • Acts 8:31–35

READ

Acts 8:26–40

EXPLAIN

The truth of Acts 8:31–35

The Spirit also uses Scripture to bring people to Jesus. He arranged it so that the Ethiopian was reading Isaiah 53, one of the fullest descriptions of the Messiah's suffering and death in the Old Testament. The Ethiopian read about someone who unjustly and silently suffered and died, but he couldn't figure out who this person was. Who is the "servant" (Isa 52:13; 53:11)? Philip answered: it is about the Messiah, and the Messiah is Jesus. Jesus suffered and was despised (Isa 53:1–3; Mark 9:12). Jesus was a servant who gave His life for the sake of others (Isa 53:4–6; Mark 10:45). Jesus was truthful, silent, and submissive even while unjustly condemned (Isa 53:7–9; Matt 26:42; John 18:36–37). Jesus was killed with wicked men but was with a rich man in His death (Isa 53:9; Matt 27:38, 57–60). Jesus died as a guilt offering, yet by rising again He gained long life (Isa 53:10a; Mark 16:6). Finally, Jesus perfectly accomplished the Father's will (Isa 53:10b; John 5:19). This is the gospel: Jesus is the Messiah who died to take away our sin (Isa 53:11–12; 2 Cor 5:21).

ASK

1. What was the Ethiopian reading?
He was reading Isaiah 53, which predicts Jesus suffering for others.
2. What did Philip explain?
Philip explained all about Jesus, starting with Isaiah 53.
3. What did Philip use to tell him about Jesus?
The Bible.

DISCUSS

1. Was this event just a big coincidence?
2. Why is it important that we use Scripture when sharing the gospel with others (Rom 10:17)?

DAY 3

Philip's testimony brought salvation • Acts 8:36–40

READ

Acts 8:26–40

EXPLAIN

The truth of Acts 8:36–40

Because of Philip's explanation, the Ethiopian believed. He showed his faith by action when he asked to be baptized. The Ethiopian's faith is also clear in his attitude. The direction of his journey didn't change, but his heart did! It turned from frustration and confusion to joy. He rejoiced because he had found the answer he had longed for. He had found forgiveness for sins and salvation from death (Rom

8:1). He had found peace and righteousness (5:1). And best of all, he had found Jesus, his precious Savior and King (Luke 2:10–11). His joy showed that he belonged to Jesus, since Jesus came to put His joy in His followers (John 15:11). With one mission accomplished, the next began. The Spirit never rests in bringing people to Jesus, and now He had two servants to work through, not just one. The Ethiopian carried his new faith back home, and over the centuries Christianity spread in Ethiopia. As for Philip, the Spirit carried him off to Azotus (Ashdod), about 20 miles north of Gaza. From there Philip continued his mission up the coast until he came to Caesarea.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. What did the Ethiopian want to do?
He wanted to be baptized.
2. What did the Ethiopian feel like afterward?
He was full of joy, because he had Jesus and the Spirit.
3. Where did the Spirit take Philip?
To Azotus (Ashdod), about 20 miles north of Gaza.
4. What did Philip do?
Philip continued to preach the gospel until he came to Caesarea.

DISCUSS 

1. Why is joy a mark of a Christian (John 15:11)?
Are you a joyful person?
2. Can a Christian be joyful in any situation? What causes you to be joyful or not?

DAY 4*Baptism: an outward picture of an inward reality • Romans 6:3–4***READ** 

Romans 6:1–14

EXPLAIN **The truth of Romans 6:3–4**

Since the Ethiopian asked about baptism, Philip must have explained it as part of the gospel message. This shows that baptism is a high priority! Outwardly, **baptism** is *immersion in water*. But it is also a symbol of an inward reality. It is *a sign of unity with Jesus* (1 Cor 12:13). It is identifying with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection and committing to live as one who belongs to Jesus (Rom 6:1–4). By being submerged in water, Christians show their unity with Jesus in His death and burial. And by rising out of the water, Christians show their unity with Jesus in His resurrection. Having been united with Jesus in His resurrection, Christians enjoy a “newness of life,” a new, righteous character (2 Cor 5:17). Baptism is also *a sign of trusting God to wash away sin*, kind of like how water washes away dirt (1 Pet 3:21). Because baptism is so important and is commanded (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38), every believer must be baptized—and should want to be baptized—if at all possible.

ASK 

1. What is baptism?
Baptism is being immersed in water as an outward sign of an inward unity and loyalty to Jesus, and as a sign of trusting God to wash away sins.
2. How did Philip show that baptism is a high priority?
Since the Ethiopian asked about baptism, Philip must have explained it as part of the gospel message.
3. Why does baptism often accompany the gospel message?
Because baptism pictures salvation.

DISCUSS 

1. Where does your church baptize? Why does it not matter where you baptize or what kind of water you use?.
2. How did Jesus show the importance of baptism (Matt 28:19)? Have you been baptized? Why or why not?

DAY 5

Always be ready • 1 Peter 3:15

READ

1 Peter 3:8–22

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Peter 3:15

Philip loved Jesus and was ready to share His Word. What about you? Have allowed Jesus to be the boss of your life? Is your heart a home for God? Do you listen to Jesus and talk to Him often, so that you know what He wants you to do? Do you obey and love His Word? Are you ready to do what Philip did: use Scripture to talk about Jesus? Do you know what you believe? Are you able to communicate what you believe to others? Christians must be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks, sharing the good news of salvation with humility, accuracy, kindness, and respect. Whenever possible, we should all witness like Philip did, because faith comes by the word of Christ (Rom 10:17). And as we saw with the Ethiopian, it is the word that causes people to be spiritually born again (1 Pet 1:23). So know the Bible and tell people what it says: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” (Rom 10:15).

ASK

1. How do we make our heart a home for God?
*By living in constant communion with Jesus.
By obeying and loving His Word.*
2. What must Christians always be ready to do?
Share the reason for their faith with anyone who asks.
3. How must Christians do it?
With “gentleness and respect.”
4. Who causes people to be spiritually reborn?
The Holy Spirit.

DISCUSS

1. What are the historical facts of the gospel (1 Cor 15:1–4)?
2. Why do people who share the gospel have “beautiful feet” (Rom 10:14–15)?

NEXT WEEK

Saul is converted

Acts 9:1–31

