

Acts 8:1-25



- 1 After Stephen was stoned to death he was buried and mourned by the Christians. Saul, who had supervised the stoning, started going from house to house dragging Christians off to prison. As the persecution grew, Christians were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Only the Apostles were left in Jerusalem.



- 2 Those who had been forced out of Jerusalem told people about Jesus wherever they went. One Christian, Philip, went to the city of Samaria and started proclaiming about Jesus. Crowds gathered to hear what he had to say.



- 3 They listened carefully as Philip spoke and saw the power of God as lame and paralysed people were healed. Some were freed from the power of evil spirits. There was great joy in the city.



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- 4 One man who came to hear Philip was Simon, a sorcerer, who had boasted he was someone great. People had been impressed with his powers, and called him 'The great power of God'. But when they saw what Philip did in the name of Jesus they believed what he said instead.



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- 5 Many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus and were baptised.



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- 6 Simon also turned away from sorcery, believed in Jesus and was baptised. He followed Philip wherever he went, amazed at the miracles he saw.



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- 7 News of what was happening in Samaria soon reached the apostles in Jerusalem. Peter and John travelled to Samaria to find out what was happening.



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- 8 They prayed for new believers and placed their hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit



9 When Simon saw the power of the Holy Spirit at work he offered money to Peter. 'Give me this ability to put my hands on people so they receive the Holy Spirit,' he begged.



10 'May your money perish with you for thinking you could buy the gift of God with money,' Peter answered. 'You have no part in this work as your heart is not right with God. Repent and pray that God will forgive you, for you are a man full of bitterness and disobedience.'
'Pray to the Lord for me,' begged Simon, 'so that nothing you say will happen to me.'



11 After telling others about Jesus in Samaria, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem peaching in Samaritan villages along the way.

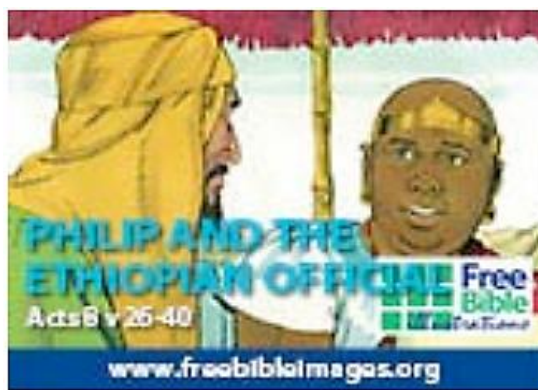


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Acts 8: 26-40

- 1 An angel of the Lord told Philip to go south to the desert road running from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip obeyed and on the road he saw a chariot. Inside was an important Ethiopian official in charge of the queen's treasury who had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home.

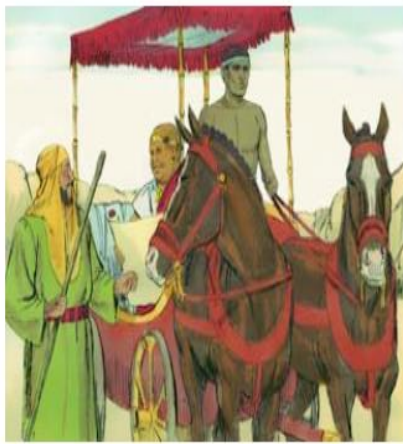


The Holy Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it.'

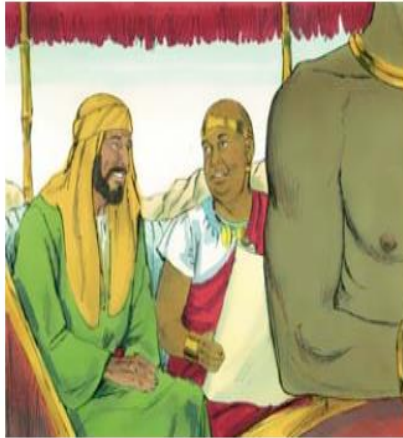
- 2 Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading aloud the words of the prophet Isaiah. (*Isaiah 53:7-8*).



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- 3 'Do you understand what you are reading?' Philip asked.
'How can I unless someone explains it to me?' The Ethiopian replied.



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- 4 He invited Philip to sit in the chariot with him.



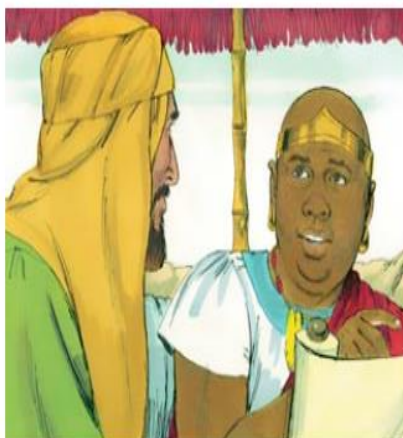
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- 5 The passage the Ethiopian was reading was about the Saviour God had promised to send. It read, 'He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.'



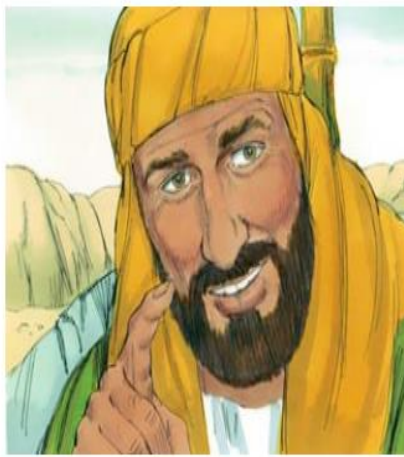
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- 6 'In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.'



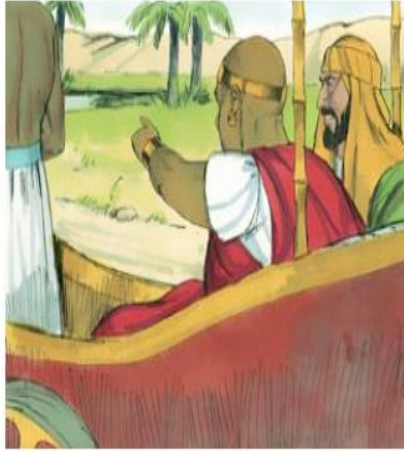
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- 7 'Please tell me who the prophet is talking about,' the Ethiopian said, 'himself or someone else?'



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- 8 'The prophet Isaiah is talking about Jesus,' Philip explained. Then he told him how Jesus had died and risen from the dead so anyone could have their sins forgiven.



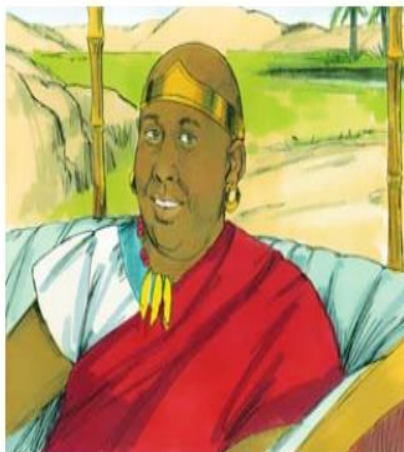
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- 9 As they travelled along the road the Ethiopian said, 'Look, here is some water. 'What can stop me being baptised?' He gave orders to stop the chariot.'



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- 10 The Ethiopian went into the water where Philip baptised him. As Philip came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took him away and he appeared at Azotus (Ashdod) where he preached in all the towns as he travelled north to Caesarea.



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- 11 The Ethiopian went on his way home rejoicing.



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