

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
The Ethiopian Eunuch
Acts 8:25-40

Last time...Simon Magnus, a sorcerer who

- with the assistance of demons, deceived people with magic he learned in Alexandria Egypt
- proclaimed himself to be the Supreme God
- said he came to the Jews as God the Son, descended to the Samaritans as God the Father, and went to the nations as God the Holy Spirit
- is the source of heresy that afflicts the Church to this day...Gnosticism

So dangerous was this heresy to the health of the “young” Body of Christ that both the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul followed Simon Magnus to Rome (all roads lead to Rome) to battle him and his doctrine

Peter and Paul followed Simon Magnus to tend the Lord’s sheep (John 21:16)

- care for the flock as shepherds
- protect the flock by battling the wolf and his heresy
- fight for sound doctrine
- fight for the spiritual health of the Lord’s flock

John 10:1 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*

John 10:10 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly*

So dangerous was this heresy that in the mid-90s the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle John to record 1 John and 2 John to declare the truth about Jesus and to refute Gnosticism

Also inspired at the time...The Gospel of John

Presents Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Deity

The “I AM” statements, that reveal Who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush in Ex 3:14, also declare the truth about Jesus Christ and refute Gnosticism

Also inspired at this time...Revelation

In His 7 letters to the 7 Churches, Jesus has harsh words for the Nicolaitans, a Gnostic cult that practiced fornication (both homosexual and heterosexual), which was forgiven by a weekly confession ritual

Within 300 years of the birth of the Church, in the 4th Century, thru a theologian and Valentinian philosopher named Augustine, the Church had become infected thru a disciple of Simon Magnus named Valentinus, the founder of the Gnostic schools in Rome and Alexandria

After over a millennium of abuse by the Roman Church, the reformers rebelled (in the 16th Century)...but Gnostic doctrine remained in the theology of many of the early reformers

Now, 500 years later and nearly 2000 years after the birth of the Church, entire denominations of Christianity are deceived by the error of Gnosticism

Those who believe

- the dogmas taught by the Roman Church
- the doctrines of Calvinism

would well advised to

- Acts 17:11...the entire counsel of God (Acts 20:27)
- follow the dogmas and doctrines to the root, which determines good/bad fruit because the root goes back to Valentinus and Simon Magnus

This time...Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch
An Adventure in Faith!

v25 they...Jerusalem...Samaritans:
They...Peter, John, and Philip

After PJ&P

- testified/witnessed of Jesus Christ
- preached the Word of God (Gospel)
 - 1 Cor 15:3-4
 - Luke 24:46-47

Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem

- in the city of Samaria
- they continued with their callings
- Peter and John back in Jerusalem
 - Philip in Samaria

The Apostles would have to contend with Jewish resistance and persecution in Jerusalem, but Philip would not have to contend with either because the Jews were not about to go “defile themselves” among the Samaritans

v26 the angel...Arise and go...desert:

While preaching the Gospel in Samaria, Philip gets a visitor, ministering spirit,
sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb 1:14)

The angel instructs Philip to, “Arise and go”

The angel tells him **where** to go...generally

- From north of Jerusalem to south of Jerusalem, to the desert
- on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza
 - 50-60 miles
 - Gaza was an important Philistine city, a strategic location on the Via Maris (Way of the Sea), the coastal trade route between Egypt and Mesopotamia

The angel does **NOT** tell Philip **why**

No reason is given to Philip as to why he is to “Arise and go.”

Philip has a decision to make: to obey or to blow the angel off

To obey, he would be like Abraham...Heb 11:8

v27a he arose and went:

Philip obeyed...by faith

He arose and went...without hesitation and without a challenge to know more
before he went

He is Spirit-led, walking by faith and not by sight

v27b-28 behold, a man of Ethiopia:

As he was walking by faith, Philip encountered a man

- an Ethiopian
 - a black man (Jer 13:23a) whose skin color declares the creative genius of mankind’s Creator
 - Moses married an Ethiopian woman (Num 12:1), which led to Aaron and Miriam speaking against Moses and the Lord subsequently and suddenly speaking against Aaron and Miriam (made leprous, a type of sin, and healed after their repentance)
 - Jeremiah was protected and rescued by an Ethiopian eunuch named Ebed-melech (Jer 38:1-13)
- a eunuch...no wife to “compete” for his time and attention
- an officer in Queen Candace’s court...a very important and influential man
- the treasurer of all the Queen’s wealth...a faithful steward

- returning home to Ethiopia from Jerusalem, where had worshipped the God of AI&J...faithful to the Jewish religion
(In Gaza he will pick up the Via Maris into Egypt, then follow the Nile River south to Ethiopia)
- sitting in his chariot reading the inspired words of God recorded in the Book of Isaiah, the “Messianic prophet” (dozens of prophesies)

A Jew from Ethiopia?

The 12 tribes of Israel were allotted their land inheritance in the land of Canaan

So how did this happen?

By the Queen of Sheba (kingdom of Sheba = modern day Ethiopia and Yemen)

1 Kings 10:1-13

“It was a true report”

“the half was not told me.”

“Blessed be the LORD thy God”

Solomon gave unto her all her desire, whatsoever she asked

According to Jewish tradition

- the Queen of Sheba’s name was Makeda
- she accepted the God of AI&J as her God...a desire of hers
- Solomon married Makeda...a desire of hers
- Solomon begat a son by Queen Makeda...a desire of hers...
who would become King of the Ethiopians

The royal line, of which Candace in Acts 8 is, can be traced to Solomon

Therefore, the 1st “outreach” of the united kingdom of Israel was to Ethiopia

Today, about 3000 years later, over 150,000 Jewish Ethiopians have walked the 1600 miles to Israel and Aliyah-ed

And they face discrimination

We as a fellowship give monthly financial support to Jewish Ethiopian Christians in Israel (FZS)

Back to the Ethiopian eunuch whose Jewish faith can be traced back to Solomon...

v29 the Spirit said...Go near and join:

Philip is given his next instruction

Notice, from the Holy Spirit Himself, not from the angel or another angel

Does God the Holy Spirit speak directly to the children of God?

Absolutely!

Not audibly in our ears but deeper, in our hearts and spirits

Because Philip obeyed

Step 1: "Arise and go",

he is told to

Step 2: "Go near and join/cleave"

Again, Philip is told **what** but **not why**

Again, Philip has a decision to make: to obey or to blow the Holy Spirit off

v30-31 Philip ran...and heard...sit with him:

Again, Philip chose to obey; in fact, he ran!

When he got to the man sitting in a chariot...

and because he did not hesitate but instead ran...

Philip heard him reading the words of God recorded by Isaiah

Philip recognized the passage being read and asks the Ethiopian if he understands what he is reading

"How can I understand unless some man guide me/'shows me the way.'"

At which point the Ethiopian invites Philip into his chariot to explain the Scriptures (a vitally important prophetic Word of God) to him

v32-33 He was led as a sheep to the slaughter:

The Ethiopian was reading Isaiah 53 and trying to understand v7-8

Is 53 speaks of the Messiah suffering and dying as the Father's sacrifice for mankind's sin

In v7-8, there was no justice for the innocent Son of Man, the promised Messiah

And He was silent as the cruel injustice came upon Him

In these days marked by confusion and fear, I hear cries of injustice and protest against the Gov't coming from Christians

Did Jesus Christ raise a ruckus or march in protest against the Roman Empire for taking away His civil liberties and "rights"? Should the Church be these days, when we have NOT been forbidden to preach the Gospel or to teach of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God, when we would rally around Jesus Christ like Peter and John did in Jerusalem (Acts 2-5)? Are we called to reform and save the world or are we called to invite the lost and condemned out of the world into the kingdom of God? Are we to lay down our rights and will for the Lord Jesus Christ, as He did for the Father?

All that matters at the end of the day is preaching the Kingdom of God/Gospel and making Jesus Christ known in a lost world

The Gov't is not preventing any of that!
We will justifiably cry and protest if/when that happens

v34 of whom speaketh the prophet:

After reading Is 53:7-8, the Ethiopian asks Who this is about

What is this that has been presented to Philip?

An open door to preach the Gospel, an opportunity given by God the Holy Spirit to testify of Jesus Christ!

This is the **why** for

- Step 1: Arise and go
- Step 2: Go near and join

And Philip has another decision to make: to speak or to not speak

v35 Philip opened his mouth:

Stepping out by faith to

- Step 1: Arise and go
- Step 2: Go near and join

Philip steps out by faith again and opens his mouth...Step 3

Starting right where the Ethiopian is, Philip teaches the clear sense of the Scripture and gives the Ethiopian understanding of the Word of God (Neh 8:8)

A door was opened for Philip to preach Jesus Christ, and he walked thru it!

Luke 24:44-47

Acts 1:1

Luke 19:10

Rom 1:16-17

Matt 28:19-20

The Holy Spirit used a willing, available, faith-full man to open the eyes of a man dead in his sin (John 8:24) who was searching for the true God

v36 what does hinder me to be baptized:

After Philip joined the Ethiopian in his chariot, the journey south continued

As they were going, the Ethiopian spots a water source sufficient for baptism for the remission of sins (John the Baptist's baptism)

He wants to know if there is any reason keeping him from being baptized...

Is there a 6 week class on the fundamentals of Christianity he must take before being baptized?

Does he have to read the NT and pass a theology test?

v37 If thou believest with all thine heart:

Philip's answer...he is filled with and being led by the Spirit...is very simple

"If you believe with all your heart, there is no reason to not be baptized."

John 6:28-29

Acts 16:30-31

Rom 10:9

The Gospel is simple!

Do not complicate it!

And the Ethiopian bursts forth a profession of faith

Matt 16:16

John 6:69

John 11:27

v38-39a into the water...come up out of the water:

What do we notice about Biblical baptism?

It is an immersion – into and up out of

Rom 6:3-4 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Jesus was not sprinkled with death, He was immersed in it!

We are not sprinkled in His everlasting life, we are immersed in it!

And then what happened?

v39b-40 caught away Philip...found...preaching

Glorious things happened after Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3!

1. Philip was “caught away”, seized, *harpazo*, gone in a flash from the presence of the Ethiopian

2 Cor 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up** to the third heaven

1 Thes 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord

WOW!!!

Because Philip was faithful/obedient to

Step 1: Arise and go

Step 2: Go near and join

Step 3: open his mouth

2. the Ethiopian continued on his way home, rejoicing in the newness of life in Christ Jesus

So begins his personal Adventure in faith!

The Church in Ethiopia can be traced to this man

The 1st “outreach” to the uttermost parts of the earth by the Church was to Ethiopia

3. The Word of God increased

Philip was “raptured” away to Azotus, modern day Ashdod, north of Gaza and about 50 miles from Caesarea

He walked the 50 miles north to Caesarea, to the place the Holy Spirit had called him

Even though he was just passing thru, Philip preached the Gospel in every city/village along the way

Recently, archaeologists have discovered evidence of early churches in Gaza

In Caesarea Philip establishes a home and raises a family
(4 daughters, all of whom will be evangelists)

Application/Lessons

1. The Ethiopian had a copy of Scriptures, was reading them, and meditating on them.
So should we, personally, every day

2. Any person searching to know the true God will find Him
Jesus promised in Matt 7:7-8
No one is born saved...chosen by God to be saved no matter how they live
No one is born chosen by God to be damned no matter how they live
Salvation is an invitation that must be accepted, believed, received by personal choice
The Spirit of God testifies of Jesus (John 15:26) and the Father draws men to Jesus
(John 6:44 because 1 Tim 2:4) but each person must choose to come to Jesus
Salvation is for whosoever will believe...personal choice, not God's choice
Clearly not all so choose because narrow is the way and few find it!

The doctrine of Valentinus is unbiblical! (false doctrine)

3. Should some man guide me (v31)

John 14:26

John 16:13

1 John 2:26-27

Eph 4:11-13...Spirit-filled men, men thru whom the Holy Spirit teaches

We all need to develop a finely tuned sense of hearing the small still voice of God

The key to understanding Scripture is: Jesus Christ

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Heb 10:7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

4. An Adventure in Faith

God's will for our lives is revealed progressively with each step of faith

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them

2 Tim 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began

btw...Eph 2:10 and 2 Tim 1:9 do not support Valentinian doctrine when the foreknowledge of the All-knowing God is joined to them

The Holy Spirit leads us, directing our steps, one step at a time,
and each step is a step of faith

He gives us one instruction at a time, not the whole plan up front

I will not know Step 2 until I obey Step 1
 Step 3 Step 2
 etc
 every day of my life

I am told **what**...or many whats...**before why** is revealed to me
I cannot know what God is doing, I must choose to obey or not with each step

Where do all the steps of faith lead?
To "WOW!!!"

e.g. Israel 2007
 Monica, Keith and Cheryl, Jenny

In Acts 8, a man called to serve tables (Acts 6) had several Adventures in Faith
Such Adventures are available to whosoever will believe and decide to obey,
one step at a time
Heb 11:8

Who wants an Adventure in Faith?

Believe with all your heart the Jesus Christ is the Son of God
Be Spirit-filled...baptism of the Holy Spirit
Listen less to the noisy world and pay close attention to the Spirit of God
Obey, without hesitation and without needing more information before going...
be Spirit-led
don't ask **why** or **what else**
One step will lead to another
The steps lead to...WOW!!!