

Acts Week 26

The Suffering Servant

We left off two weeks ago as Philip climbed up into the eunuchs chariot as he had just asked Philip to help him understand. He was reading from the book of Isaiah 8:32-33; **The place in the scripture which he read as this** “**He was led as a sheep to the slaughter’ And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.** If these verses sound familiar they should to most of us, they come out of Isaiah 52:7-8. The eunuch was confused as to who was the prophet talking about, himself or another?

Verse 8:33; **So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this , of himself or of some other man?”** To realize what it must have been like for the eunuch we need to put ourselves in his place. Christianity was new, the Ethiopian eunuch was reading from Isaiah, we can only speculate as to what was running through the eunuch's mind. Was this relevant to what was going on in the church now, in the early century, or did it? We know it was the Old Testament, we know this event was taking place in short time after the crucifixion, we know that Jesus not only humbled himself, but allowed Himself to be humiliated by the scorn and mocking of Israel’s leaders and teachers, still He remained obedient unto death. However, today we have people who have the entire history of the scripture and still know very little about Jesus. In fact, if you were to take a census in Israel you might find a few who acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. Yet, as we read here of Philip and the Eunuch we find a faith that is such of our Christ in that the eunuch professes his faith in Jesus. This demonstrates how powerful the word of God was at that time in history. It is obvious to us today as we look back up Isaiah that these verses address Jesus long before Jesus’s name came up.

35 The Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the Eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” 37 Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

Both John Calvin and Martin Luther address the eunuch as he is denied in verse 27, **“great authority under Candace the Queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury,”**

This would imply that this Ethiopian was educated and served the Queen, so he was not an ignorant man and yet he brings no acclaim of superiority to who he was or why he was there. In humbleness he boldly admits his lack of understanding and asks Philip for help. These verses bring notice to the humble nature of both men and our Lord Jesus serving in all humbleness and surrender.

God can accomplish little through the one who claims to know more than others, but the man who serves in humility is a treasure to our Lord God. Proverbs 23:9; **A man’s pride will bring**

him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor. Did Philip not honor the Ethiopian, the right answer is yes, he did. In humbleness the eunuch received his answers and was baptized. As he and Philip came up out of the water the Angel of the Lord transported Philip and he was gone, then the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. It is interesting that the eunuch didn't get alarmed or frightened but found security in his new understanding and faith. The eunuch's excitement was such that his focus on the newness and understanding of our Lord.

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus.¹ And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

How was Philip so sure that it was Jesus Isaiah was writing about? It appears from the scripture that Jesus' name and life became known in a short time. People were able to look back and better understand knowing of our Lord's persecutors and His surrendering to the cross. People were facing persecution and death for believing and still they believed and the church was growing rapidly. Resentment by some may be the closest Americans come to facing the resistance of others, but still in our world today many are still living under the threat of death for merely believing.

¹ Azotus: the same as Ashdod:

ash'-dod ('ashdodh; Azotos; modern Esdud): One of the five chief cities of the Philistines. The name means stronghold or fortress, and its strength may be inferred by the fact that Psammetik I, of Egypt, besieged it for many years (Herodotus says 29). Some of the Anakim were found there in the days of Joshua ([Joshua 11:22](#)), and the inhabitants were too strong for the Israelites at that time. It was among the towns assigned to Judah, but was not occupied by her ([Joshua 13:3](#); [Joshua 15:46, 47](#)). It was still independent in the days of Samuel, when, after the defeat of the Israelites, the ark was taken to the house of Dagon in Ashdod ([1 Samuel 5:1, 2](#)). We have no account of its being occupied even by David, although he defeated the Philistines many times, and we have no definite knowledge of its coming into the hands of Judah until the time of Uzziah ([2 Chronicles 26:6](#)).