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Called to Break Down Barriers

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
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Acts 8:26-39

Introduction: **The Missionary Labors of Philip.** **SUMMARY**--The Persecution at Jerusalem. Saul's Zeal in Persecution. Philip's Conversion of the Samaritans. Simon the Sorcerer Believes. Peter and John Sent Down to Bestow the Miraculous Powers of the Holy Spirit. Simon's Wicked Offer and Peter's Rebuke. **Philip sent to Preach to the Ethiopian Eunuch.** He Explains the Scriptures on the Way and Preaches Jesus. The Eunuch's Request for Baptism. Baptized and goes on His Way Rejoicing. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pnt/acts-8.html>)

Acts 8:25-26, *And they, when they had testified and **preached the word** of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. And the **angel** of the Lord spake unto **Philip**, saying, Arise, and go **toward (down about) the south (noon)** unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto **Gaza**, which is desert.*

NOTE: To inquire who this angel was, whether Michael or Gabriel, or the tutelar (guardian; protecting) angel of **Ethiopia**, or of the **eunuch**, or of **Philip**, is too curious; it was one of the **ministering spirits** SENT forth by Christ, to serve a gracious purpose of his, and for the good of one of the heirs of salvation:

saying, arise; at once, make haste and speed, and quick dispatch; the phrase denotes readiness, alacrity, and expedition:

and go toward the south; the southern point from the city of **Samaria**, where Philip now was; or to the south of Jerusalem: the parts of Gaza, Lydda, Jamnia, Joppa were called the "south": hence often mention is made of such a Rabbi and such a Rabbi, that he was (amwrd) , "of the south" ^{F11}; so R. Joshua, who was of Lydda, is said to be of the south. The **Ethiopic version** renders it at **"NOON TIME"**, and so the Arabic of De Dieu; as if it respected NOT the PLACE whither he was to go, but **the TIME** when he WAS to go; and that it might be about the middle of the day...

Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/acts-8.html>

NOTE: Unto Gaza - Gaza, or **Azzah** Genesis 10:19, was a city of the **Philistines**, given by Joshua to Judah Joshua 15:47; 1 Sam. 6:17. It was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. It was formerly a large place; was situated on an eminence, and commanded a beautiful prospect. It was in this place that **Samson** took away the gates of the city, and bore them off, Jud. 16:2-3. It was near Askelon, about 60 miles southwest from Jerusalem. **Which is desert** - This may refer either to the **"way"** or to the **"place."** The natural construction is the latter. In explanation of this, it is to be observed that there were **"two" towns** of that name, **Old and New Gaza**. The prophet Zephaniah Zeph. 2:4 said that "Gaza" should be "forsaken," that is, destroyed. "This was partly accomplished by **Alexander the Great** (Josephus, *Antiq.*, book 11, chapter 8, sections 3 and 4; book 13, chapter 13, section 3). Another town was afterward built of the same name, but at some

distance from the former, and Old Gaza was abandoned to desolation. Strabo mentions Gaza the desert, and Diodorus Siculus speaks of 'Old Gaza' (Robinson's *Calmet*). Some have supposed, however, that Luke refers here to the **"road" leading to Gaza**, as being **desolate** and **uninhabited**. Dr. Robinson (*Biblical Res.*, 2:640) remarks: "There were several ways leading from Jerusalem to Gaza. The most frequented at the present day, although the longest, is the way by Ramleh. Anciently there appear to have been two more direct roads. Both these roads exist at the present day, and the one actually passes through the **desert**, that is, through a **tract of country without villages, inhabited** only by NOMADIC TRIBES." "In this place, in 1823, the American missionaries, Messrs. Fisk and King, found Gaza, a town built of stone, making a very mean (poor) appearance, and confining about five thousand inhabitants" (Hall on the Acts).

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/acts-8.html>)

Acts 8:27-28, *And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an EUNUCH of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship...*

Eunuch defined 2135. eunuchos pronounced yoo-noo'-khos from eune (a bed) and 2192; a castrated person (such being employed in Oriental bed-chambers); by extension an impotent (wanting the power of procreation; also, sometimes, sterile; barren) **OR unmarried man; by implication, a chamberlain (state-OFFICER).**

Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

NOTE: An eunuch of great authority; he might be one that was literally so, it being common for eastern princes and great men to have such persons as guards over their **wives**, to preserve their chastity; and so hereby was a fulfilment in part of Isaiah 56:3 though this word is used to denote a person in office: so **Potiphar** is called, an **eunuch**, though **he had a WIFE**, and which we rightly render an OFFICER; and the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "**a prince**", or **great man**, Genesis 39:1.

Isaiah 56:3, Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath **joined** himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD (Yahweh) hath utterly separated me from his people: **neither** let the **eunuch** say, Behold, **I am a DRY tree**.

So Balaam is said Heb. Chron. Mosis, fol. 4. 2. & 6. 2. to be one of the king's eunuchs, and yet **Jannes** and **Jambres** are said to be his sons; and the word Dynastes here used, which we translate "of great authority", may be considered as explanative of the word eunuch; to teach us, that this word was NOT expressive of his case, but a **TITLE of office**: it is reported of this **eunuch**, that **after his conversion he preached the Gospel** to the inhabitants of Zeylan and Arabia Felix, and in the island of Traprobane in the Red sea, and at last **suffered martyrdom** Fabricii Lux Evangelii, p. 115, 708:....

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/acts-8.html>)

NOTE: Candace ...This was the **dynastic name** of the **queens of Ethiopia**, just as **Pharaoh** was the DYNASTIC NAME, or TITLE, of the kings of Egypt. The kingdom was that of Meroe. The fact of the eunuch's traveling some **fifteen hundred miles** to worship indicates that he was a devout worshiper of God. As he came along in his chariot, reading from a roll of the prophecy of Isaiah, someone has said that he was like a man at sunrise, tilting his manuscript in such a manner as to catch the first rays of the rising sun of Christianity.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/acts-8.html>)

Acts 8:29, *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.*

NOTE: Then the Spirit said unto Philip,.... NOT the angel, a ministering Spirit, as in Acts 8:26 but the HOLY SPIRIT, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, the same with

the Spirit of the Lord, Acts 8:39 who spoke unto him, **either** by an **articulative voice**, such as was the Bath Kol among the Jews; **OR inwardly**, by a **secret impulse** upon him, he directed him, saying:

go near, and join thyself to this chariot; he bid him walk up to the chariot, he saw driving on the road at such a distance, and follow it, and attend it closely; and NOT leave it, till **an opportunity** of conversing with the person in it offered.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/acts-8.html>)

Acts 8:30-31, And Philip RAN thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide (teach) ME? And HE desired Philip that he would come up and SIT with him.

NOTE: ...how can I, except some man should guide me?... Which shows that he was of an excellent spirit and temper; since instead of answering in a haughty and disdainful manner, as great men are too apt to do; and instead of charging Philip with, impertinence (rudeness) and insolence (arrogant contempt), in interrupting him whilst reading, and putting such a question to him, **he expresses himself with great and uncommon modesty;** with a sense and confession of his ignorance and incapacity and of the necessity and usefulness of the instructions of men, appointed of God to open and explain the Scriptures: and though **he wanted such a guide**, and could have been glad of one, yet he was willing to use all diligence himself in reading, that he, might, if possible, come at some knowledge of the truth; which was very commendable in him; and no doubt but the spirit he was in was much owing to his reading the word, and to the Spirit of God disposing his mind in this manner:

...**he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him;** which is an instance of his great humanity and courteousness, and of his meekness and condescension, as well as of his vehement **thirst after the knowledge of the Scriptures;** he concluding, or at least hoping by Philip's question, and by the air and look of the man, that he was one that might be useful to him this way.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/acts-8.html>)

Thought 1. Now, we see exactly why Philip was SENT to him. He wanted to Know the truth, but needed someone to teach him. When we understand, we have the SKILL to teach others.

Psalms 119:130, The entrance (opening [revealing; interpreting.]) of thy words giveth light (illumination [enlightening of the understanding by knowledge, or the mind by spiritual light]); it giveth understanding unto to the simple (foolish).

Romans 10:14-17, How then shall they call on HIM in whom they have NOT believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a PREACHER?

Preacher, one who PREACHES (to proclaim or publish tidings; specifically, to proclaim the gospel; to discourse publicly on a religious subject, or from a text of Scripture; to deliver a sermon.)

And how shall they preach, except they be SENT? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have NOT all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report. So then **FAITH** cometh by **HEARING**, and **hearing** by the word **OF** God.

Hearing defined 189, hearing (the sense (discernment: understanding) or the thing heard): FAME (report of great actions). (See Luke 4:14, 37; 5:15)
Of, 1. **FROM** 2. denoting reference to a thing; **ABOUT**; concerning.

Thought 2. So, then FAITH comes by **TWO** ways. **(1)** It comes by hearing

and getting the **UNDERSTANDING** of the word FROM or ABOUT God. And **(2)**, It comes by hearing the **REPORT** of great actions from or about God. In the last part of the definition, reports about God are TESTIMONIES.

Psalm 119:99, I have more understanding than ALL my teachers: for thy **testimonies** are my meditation.

Acts 8:32-33, *The place of the scripture which he read was this, **He was led** as a **sheep** to the **slaughter**; and like a **lamb dumb (voiceless)** before his shearer, so opened he NOT his mouth: In his **humiliation (depression in rank or feeling)** his **judgment (justice)** was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his LIFE is TAKEN from the earth.*

NOTE: In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away - He who was the fountain of judgment and justice had no justice shown him (mercy he needed NOT) in his humiliation; viz. that TIME in which he **emptied himself**, and appeared in the **form of a servant**. **Who shall declare his generation** - Answering to the Hebrew, which Bp. Lowth understands as implying his manner of life. It was the CUSTOM among the Jews, when they were taking away any criminal from judgment to execution, to **call out** and **inquire** whether there was any person who could appear in behalf of the character of the criminal - whether there was any who, from intimate **acquaintance** with **his manner of life**, could **SAY any thing** in **HIS FAVOR**? This circumstance I have noticed before, and it has been particularly remarked in the case of Stephen: see at Acts 7:60. In our Lord's case, this benevolent inquiry does NOT appear to have been made; and perhaps to this **breach of JUSTICE**, as well as **of CUSTOM**, the prophet refers; and this shows how minutely the conduct of those bad men was known **seven hundred years** before it took place. God can foreknow what he pleases, and can do what he pleases; and all the operations of his infinite mind are just and right. **Some** think that, who shall declare his generation? refers to his eternal Son ship; others, to his miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin; others, to the multitudinous progeny of spiritual children which should be born unto God, in consequence of his passion and meritorious death. Perhaps the **FIRST**, which refers to the usual **custom** in behalf of the criminal, is **the BEST** and most natural sense. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/acts-8.html>)

Acts 8:34-36, *And the **eunuch** answered **Philip**, and said, I pray thee, **of WHOM** speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then **Philip** opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and **preached unto him Jesus**. 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**?*

NOTE: **And as they went on their way** In the road from Jerusalem to Gaza; Philip preaching, and the eunuch hearing, and conversing in a religious and spiritual way together; and Beza says in one exemplar it is added, "conferring one with another"; about the person and office of Christ, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the **ordinances** of it; as appears by what follows, both by the eunuch's request to be admitted to baptism, and his confession of faith: **they came unto a certain water**; which some say was at Bethhoron, in the tribe of Judah or Benjamin; and others think it was the river Eleutherus; the former is more likely; concerning which Jerom ^{F6} gives this account: "Bethzur in the tribe of Judah, or Benjamin, and now called Bethhoron, is a village as we go from Aella (or Jerusalem) to Hebron, twenty miles from it; near which is a fountain, springing up at the bottom of a mountain, and is swallowed up in the same ground in which it is produced; and the Acts of the Apostles relate, that the eunuch of queen Candace was baptized here by Philip." This place was about two miles from Hebron; since that, according to the same writer, was twenty two miles from Jerusalem. Borchardus (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/acts-8.html>)

Acts 8:37, *And **Philip** said, **IF** thou **BELIEVEST** with **all** thine heart, thou mayest.*

Believest defined 4100. pisteuo pronounced *pist-yoo'-o*; to have FAITH (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), i.e. credit; by impli., to entrust (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ), commit (to trust), put in trust with.

And he answered and said, **I BELIEVE (have FAITH, commit to trust) that Jesus (Yahshua) Christ (Messiah) IS the Son of God.**

NOTE: *I believe*, etc. This profession is more than a professed belief that Jesus was the Messiah. The name *Christ* implies that. "I believe that *Jesus the Messiah*" is, etc. In addition to this, he professed his belief that he was *the Son of God*-- showing either that he had before supposed that the Messiah *would be* the Son of God, or that Philip had instructed him on that point. It was natural for Philip, in discoursing on the **humiliation and poverty of Jesus**, to add also that he sustained a higher rank of being than a man, and WAS the Son of God. What precise ideas the eunuch attached to this expression cannot be now determined. This verse is wanting in a very large number of manuscripts, (*Mill*), and has been rejected by many of the ablest critics. It is also omitted in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions. It is not easy to conceive why it has been omitted in almost all the Greek Mss., unless it is spurious. If it was not in the original copy of the Acts, it was probably inserted by some early transcriber, and was deemed so important to the connection, to show that the eunuch was not admitted hastily to baptism, that it was afterwards retained. It contains, however, an important truth, elsewhere abundantly taught in the Scriptures, that **faith** is necessary to a proper profession of religion.
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/acts-8.html>)

Thought 1. Remember now, this believing is just like what the people did that BELIEVED Moses and looked at the brass serpent on the pole and LIVED.

Numbers 21:4-9, And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the **soul** of the people was much **discouraged** because of the way. And the people spake **against God**, and against **Moses**, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord **sent (appoint) fiery (burning, (fig.) poisonous) serpents** among the people, and they **bit** the people; and much people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have **sinned**, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; **pray** unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, **Make** thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a **pole**: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he **looketh (GAZE) upon it**, shall **LIVE**.

...Moses made a serpent of **brass** ...put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he **beheld** the serpent of brass, he **LIVED**.

Thought 2. They looked to behold the serpent because they **BELIEVED** the report.

John 3:14-16, And **AS** (just like) Moses lifted up the **serpent** in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but have **eternal life**. For God **so loved** the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH In him should NOT perish, but have **everlasting LIFE**.

1 John 5:1, Whosoever **BELIEVETH** that **Jesus** is the Christ **IS BORN** of God...

Acts 10:42-47, And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify... that through his **name (authority)** whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the **Holy Ghost** fell on all them which **heard** the word. ...they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many

as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them **speak with tongues**, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid **WATER**, that these should NOT be **baptized**, which **have RECEIVED** the **Holy Ghost** as well as we?

1 John 5:10-12, He that **BELIEVETH on** the Son of God hath the **witness** in himself: he that believeth NOT God hath made (determine) him a liar; because he believeth NOT the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God **HATH given** to **US** **eternal life**, and this **LIFE** is IN his **Son**. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath NOT the Son of God hath NOT life.

Acts 8:38, *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**.*

Thought 1. He was baptized because he was now saved, by his faith. Notice, he **didn't pray** for him to be saved. Baptism shows what's already taken place in the heart. Acts 10:47

Acts 8:39-40, *And when they were come up 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. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.*

NOTE: **...were come up out of the water,...** Which is another circumstance, showing that baptism was then performed by immersion; with this compare Matt. 3:16 and so it is said of the high priest, when he **WASHED HIMSELF** on the day of atonement, "**he went down and dipped**, and **came up**"^F Misna Yoma, c. 3. sect. 4. 6. & 7. sect. 3. 4. ; and so any other person that was obliged to dipping on any account, "went down and dipped, and came up" T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 13. 1. . And again it is said^{F15T} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 66. 2. , it happened to a servant maid of Rabbi, "that she dipped herself and came up".

The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; as soon as the ordinance was over; so that the eunuch had no opportunity of rewarding him for his instructions and labour; and this might be done on purpose to show that he had no mercenary end in joining himself to his chariot; and this **sudden RAPTURE** (transport) and **disappearance** might be a confirmation to the eunuch that this whole affair was of (FROM) God. The Spirit of the Lord **TOOK UP Philip**, just as he is said to **lift UP Ezekiel, between earth and heaven**, Ezekiel 8:3 and **CARRIED HIM ABOVE** the earth as far as Azotus. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Beza's, and some others, read the words thus, "the holy Spirit fall upon the eunuch, but the angel of the Lord caught away Philip"; the same angel, it may be, that bid him go toward the south:

that the eunuch saw him no more; neither at that time, nor perhaps ever after; for one went one way, and another way:

and he went on his way; towards Ethiopia; and, as the Ethiopic version reads, "into his OWN country"; which is one reason why he saw Philip no more: however, he went thither **rejoicing**, as he had great reason to do; being blessed with the saving knowledge of Christ, and **TRUE FAITH** in the Son of God, and admitted to the **holy ordinance of baptism**; having **first RECEIVED** the **baptism** of the **Spirit**, or having the grace of the Spirit bestowed on him, and implanted IN him: and, according to some copies just now mentioned, after his baptism the Spirit fell on him in an extraordinary manner, and that without imposition of hands; so that, upon the whole, **he had great reason to rejoice**. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/acts-8.html>)

NOTE: **Azotus** ... was the ancient **Philistine city** of Ashdod; and **Philip preached there** and in all the cities of the Mediterranean coast until he came to Caesarea Palestina where **he established a residence**. We shall meet with Philip again in Acts 21:8. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/acts-8.html>)