

# THE MESSENGER



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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## Conversion of the Eunuch

by Donnie V. Rader

One of the most notable cases of conversion in the book of Acts is that of the Ethiopian treasurer. The story is a simple one with many practical lessons to be gleaned from it.

### The Prospect (vv. 26-34)

Let's consider what we know about this man that was converted at the preaching of Philip.

1. *He was a eunuch* (v. 27). We are not told whether he was born a eunuch or was made one by men or became one by choice (Matt. 19:12). What little we do know seems to indicate that he did not allow his problems to get in the way of his interest in spiritual things. He did not take his frustration out on God by refusing to serve him. In spite of his lot in life, he was willing to listen to and obey God.
2. *He was the treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia* (v. 27). He was a man of great power and authority. He was the Nicholas Brady or Lloyd Bentsen of the day. He was a man of prestige. Yet, he needed the gospel just like anyone else.
3. *He was a dedicated religious man* (v. 27). He had gone to Jerusalem (about 1,000 miles) to worship. This not only tells us that he was a religious man, but he was devoted to what he thought was right. He obviously was sincere. However, he was still in sin and needed to obey the gospel.
4. *He desired to know the truth*. As he was riding along in his chariot, he was reading the word of God (v. 30). When Philip came, he asked for help in understanding the words of the prophets (vv. 31, 34). He willingly listened to the preaching of the truth (v. 35) as is evident by his response (vv. 36-39).

We have already learned some basic lessons: (1) The gospel is for all – those with power, money and fame, as well as those who have none of these. All still need the gospel. (2) One can be religious and yet be wrong. (3) If one desires to see the truth and searches for it, he can see and obey it.

### The Sermon (v. 35)

Though we are not given the complete text of Philip's sermon, we can draw some conclusions about its content from the context.

1. *The sermon was taken from Isaiah 53*. The eunuch was reading from this text when Philip “beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him” (v. 35). We learn a couple of things from this: (a) Our text

(Acts 8) serves as a divine interpretation of Isaiah 53. We know, without a doubt, that the prophet was speaking of Jesus. (b) Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He is the Messiah.

2. *The sermon was about Christ.* The text said he preached Jesus to him (v. 35). This would involve the same message that was preached in other cases of conversion. Taking Isaiah 53 as his text he must have preached about Christ being rejected of men, being crucified and being raised again. He must have preached something about the Deity of Christ for the eunuch came to believe that Jesus is the Son of God (v. 37).
3. *The sermon included a message about what he must do in obedience to Christ.* He must have preached on the necessity of baptism for the prospect asked to be baptized (vv. 36, 38). There seems to have been some urgency to be baptized as soon as they came upon some water (vv. 36-39).

Through the preaching in this sermon God operated upon the sinner to convict and convert him. It was not done by an angel. Notice that the angel appeared to the preacher to send him to the sinner and did not appear to the sinner to convert him (vv. 26, 29). There is no evidence of any direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Response (vv. 36-39)**

1. *He was eager to obey* (v. 36). He saw the urgency of obedience. He wanted to be baptized immediately. Those who are thinking of obeying the gospel today must recognize that they could die at any time (Heb. 9:27) and Christ could come (II Pet. 3:10).

He asked, "What hinders me from being baptized?" That is a logical question once one learns what God would have him to do. He apparently couldn't think of one thing keeping him from obeying the gospel. Neither could Philip. So, he was baptized.

2. *He believed what was preached* (v. 37). He accepted the teaching about Jesus and his need to respond in obedience.
3. *He repented.* Repentance is not specifically mentioned. However, he was eager to obey the gospel which indicates repentance. He wanted to make a change in his life which is what repentance involves.
4. *He confessed his faith* (v. 37). When this prospect was asked if he believed, he confessed (acknowledged), "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This was not a confession of sin, but one of faith. He was doing what Romans 10:9-10 states is required.
5. *He was baptized* (v. 38). He, like every other convert in the book of Acts, was baptized. He did what Jesus commanded for salvation (Mark 16:16). His baptism was a burial in water for both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water (v. 38).
6. *He rejoiced* (v. 39). Having obeyed the Lord, he now has the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and the hope of eternal life (Heb. 5:9). No wonder he goes on his way rejoicing. Obedience to the Lord produces true happiness.

This is a simple story of a sinner, a teacher, the Scriptures and obedience.

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## **News and Notes:** Tuesday Bible Studies – 11 a.m. Old Testament and 7 p.m. Romans

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

*"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* James 5:16