

Approximately 30 minutes expository message



★ One Road, One Question, One Savior Acts 8:26-40:

Opening Prayer:

Father God, thank You for giving us Your Word. As we come to this account in Acts, help us hear more than the story of a journey long ago. Show us the love of Jesus for one person seeking the truth. Give us hearts that obey when You call, ears that listen when someone asks, and faith to receive the good news for ourselves. In Jesus' name, amen.

Historical Setting:

Picture a road leading southwest from Jerusalem toward Gaza. In the first century,

Jerusalem was the center of Jewish worship. People traveled there from far beyond Judea, especially for the great festivals. But Acts 8 opens during a **difficult time** for the young church. Stephen has been killed, persecution has scattered believers, and Philip has been preaching Christ in Samaria.

God has been doing remarkable things through Philip. Crowds are listening. People are being healed. Many are receiving the good news. Then an angel tells Philip to leave and take the road toward Gaza - a desert road.

Out on that road is another traveler. Acts calls him an Ethiopian, an important official who manages the treasury of the *Kandake*  **kan-DAH-kay**, the queen. In the ancient world, “Ethiopia” could refer to the African kingdom of Kush, whose royal center was at Meroë, in what is now Sudan. The name *Kandake*  **kan-DAH-kay** was

a royal title. This man had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was now traveling home while reading the prophet Isaiah. Acts tells us why he visited Jerusalem; it does not tell us how he first came to worship Israel's God.

Think about the distance he has traveled and the question he carries. He holds a position of great responsibility. He has access to a scroll of Scripture. Yet he still needs someone to explain what he is reading.

That is where our story begins.

★ A Road That Looked Empty:

  (NIV) **Acts 8:26–27**

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an

important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,¹

In Acts 8:26, the angel tells Philip to go toward the desert road. Verse 27 begins with a simple response: **“So he started out.”**

I love that. Philip has been preaching where people gather in crowds. Now God sends him where the road looks almost empty. Philip does not know whom he will meet. He goes because **God has directed him.**

👉 That is a lesson for every Christian, whether you have followed Jesus for three weeks or thirty years. We often judge an opportunity by how large it looks. We see a full room and think, *God must be working*

¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 8:26–27.

here. We see one person and wonder whether the effort will matter.

But God saw this traveler before Philip ever stepped onto the road. He knew what the man was reading. He knew the question forming in his mind. And He sent someone who could tell him about Jesus.

Perhaps there is a person in your life you keep thinking about: someone at work, someone in your family, someone who seems curious but has never asked you directly about faith. You do not have to know the whole conversation in advance. Philip did not. The first step may simply be to go, to listen, and to be available.

★ **A Traveler With an Honest Question:**



(NIV)

Acts 8:28-34²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet.²⁹ The

Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

³¹ “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“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.

³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth.” x

34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”²

The Spirit tells Philip to go near the chariot. As Philip approaches, he hears the official reading Isaiah aloud. Philip asks whether he understands what he is reading. The man welcomes his help and invites him up into the chariot.

Notice the kindness in that moment. Philip does not begin by showing off what he knows. He starts with a question. The official does not pretend to understand. He is willing to learn.

There is room in the Christian life for honest questions. Some people are afraid to ask because they think everyone else already understands the Bible. Others have been believers for years and feel embarrassed

² [*The New International Version*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 8:28–34.

that a passage still puzzles them. This traveler shows us a better way: 🤔 💭 👉 open the Scriptures, admit what you do not know, and seek an answer.

And Philip shows us how to help. Come alongside the person. Find out what they are actually asking. Then open the Word of God together.

The official is reading Isaiah 53, a passage about a servant who suffers without defending himself and whose life is taken away. He asks Philip whether the prophet is speaking about himself or someone else.

That is the question at the heart of the encounter. *Who is this suffering servant?*

★ **Philip Tells Him About Jesus:**



(NIV)

Acts 8:35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. ³



(NIV)

Isaiah 53:7-8 ⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. ⁴

³ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 8:35.

⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Is 53:7–8.

Philip begins with that very passage and tells him the good news about Jesus.

Imagine that conversation as the chariot moves along. Philip can speak of Jesus, who was rejected and handed over to death. He can explain how Jesus gave His life for sinners and rose again. The man has been reading about suffering; Philip shows him the Savior.

This is one reason we keep opening the Bible in church. We need more than an inspiring thought to carry home. We need to see what God has said, and we need to understand how the good news of Jesus answers our deepest need.

★ **The Good News Is for This Man Too:**



(NIV)

Acts 8:27-35 ²⁷ *So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of*

all the treasury of the Kandake  kan-DAH-kay (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

³¹ “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

***“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.

³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

***Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”***

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

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(NIV)

Isaiah 56:3-5 ³ Let no

foreigner who is bound to the LORD say,

“The LORD will surely exclude me from his people.”

***And let no eunuch complain,
“I am only a dry tree.”***

⁵ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 8:27–35.

***⁴ For this is what the LORD says:
“To the eunuchs who keep my
Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant—
⁵ to them I will give within my temple
and its walls
a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that will endure forever.⁶***

Think about who is sitting beside Philip. This official comes from another land. He serves a royal household. He has traveled to Jerusalem seeking to worship God. Yet as a **eunuch**, he may also have known what it felt like to be kept at a distance from parts of Israel’s religious life. The Bible does not tell us everything about his

⁶ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Is 56:3–5.

experience in Jerusalem, so we should not invent it. We can, however, hear the hope in Isaiah's promise that **faithful eunuchs** would be welcomed and given a lasting place among God's people.

Now he is reading Isaiah, and Philip is telling him about Jesus.

What a beautiful meeting of promise and fulfillment. The man does not need to become a different sort of person before he can come to Christ. He needs the Savior Isaiah points toward.

And so do we!

You may have grown up in church and still wonder where you stand with God. You may be new to the Bible and feel as though you have arrived halfway through a conversation. You may have done things you are ashamed of. Hear what Philip brings to that chariot: the good news about **Jesus**.

Jesus did not come only for people with a clean record or a complete understanding. He came to save sinners. The cross shows how serious our sin is, and how great His love is. His resurrection gives us reason to trust that His promise of life is true.

For the mature believer, there is another challenge here. Philip had been part of a powerful ministry in Samaria, yet he gave his attention to one man's question.

- 🤔💭 Do we still have time for one person?
- Do we listen patiently enough to find out what someone is reading, fearing, or trying to understand?

👉 The gospel travels through conversations like this one.

★ “What Can Stand in the Way?”

📖 + (NIV) ***Acts 8:36-38*** ³⁶ ***As they traveled along the road, they came to***

some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” [37note] Some manuscripts include here Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.⁷

{Here is a **note about verse 37**. Some will notice that KJV, NASB, NKJV will have the complete scripture in verse 37. However, others like NIV, ESV, will not.

Why?

Ancient copies of Acts differ at this point. The NIV and ESV editors judged that the confession was probably added to the passage during copying, so they did not print it as part of the main text. The NKJV, KJV, and NASB prints it and notes that other manuscript traditions omit it. This is a question about which wording Luke originally wrote, not a disagreement about whether Jesus is the Son of God.

“Some ancient manuscripts add a confession here: the Ethiopian declares his belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The NIV places those words in a footnote because the manuscripts differ. Either way, Acts tells us that Philip explained the good news about Jesus, and the man responded by being baptized.”}

As they travel, they come to water. The official sees it and asks what could prevent

⁷ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 8:36–38.

him from being baptized. The chariot stops. Philip and the official go down into the water, and Philip baptizes him.

What has happened between the question in the chariot and the water by the road? Philip has explained the good news about Jesus, and the man wants to respond. Baptism is a public way to identify with Christ. Going into the water, he is declaring that his old life does **not** have the final word. He now belongs to Jesus.

The water itself does not make the Savior's work complete. Jesus is the one who saves. But when this man hears the good news, he does not want to keep his response hidden.

  I wonder whether Philip smiled when he heard the question.

A little while earlier, the official needed help understanding Isaiah. Now he sees water and wants to take a step of faith.

   God has been at work on this road all along.

If you have trusted Christ but have put off baptism, take this passage seriously. Talk with your pastor or church about being baptized. It is a joyful opportunity to say openly, **“I belong to Jesus.”**

★ What Happened Afterward?

  (NIV) ***Acts 8:39-40*** ³⁹ ***When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.*** ⁴⁰ ***Philip, however, appeared at Azotus***  ***uh-ZOH-tuhs and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.***⁸

⁸ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 8:39–40.

Acts tells us that after the baptism, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away. The official did not see him again, but “**went on his way rejoicing.**” Philip appeared at Azotus  **uh-ZOH-tuhs** and continued preaching through the towns until he reached Caesarea.

That joy is the last thing Luke tells us about the Ethiopian official. Scripture does not record his name, his arrival home, or the rest of his life. His journey continued, but the account stops there.

  Was he part of the beginning of the “Ethiopian church”?

- Maybe...

It is possible that he shared the gospel when he returned. A later Christian historian, Eusebius  **yoo-SEE-bee-us**, says that he proclaimed Christ in his own

country. That is an early church tradition, rather than something Acts itself confirms.

We should also remember that the official's kingdom of Kush was centered in the region of present-day Sudan; it should not be treated as identical to the later Ethiopian church without explanation.

What we can say with confidence is that an African royal official heard about Jesus, was baptized, and continued his journey rejoicing.

That is already a remarkable ending. The good news has crossed another boundary. The man who set out from Jerusalem with a question now travels toward home with joy.

We may never know all that God did through him. The same is true of many people we meet. We share what we know of Jesus; God sees the whole road ahead.

★ **An Invitation to New Life:**

Before we close, let me ask you to put yourself in that chariot for a moment.

You may know a great deal about church. You may be able to find Isaiah in your Bible. But have you trusted the Jesus whom Philip proclaimed?

Isaiah's suffering servant points us to the One who gave Himself for us.

- Jesus died for our sins and rose again.
- He invites you to turn from sin and trust Him.
- You cannot earn a new life by collecting enough good deeds.
- You receive it by faith in Christ.

👉 Jesus said that we must be **born again**. That means receiving new life from God. If you have never come to Him, you can come today.

Tell Him honestly that you need His forgiveness. Put your trust in Jesus, who

died and rose again. Ask Him to make you His own and teach you to follow Him.

You do **not** need to have every question answered before you call out to Him. The Ethiopian official began with a question and found that the Scripture he was reading led him to Jesus. You can begin right where you are.



Let us pray.

Lord Jesus I need you thank you for dying on the cross for my sins.... I open the door of my life to receive you as my savior and Lord.... Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life take control of the throne of my life make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.

👉 And if you already belong to Christ, ask Him to give you Philip's willingness and the official's eagerness.

- Be ready to go when He directs you.
- Be humble enough to keep learning.
- Be glad to speak of Jesus when someone asks.

A desert road became the setting for a life changing conversation. The same Lord still sees people on their journeys. He still works through His Word. And the good news of Jesus is still worth sharing, one person at a time.



Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for seeking people wherever they are. Thank You for giving Your life for our sins and rising again so that we can have life in You. For anyone ready to turn to You today, give them faith to trust You and the joy of knowing Your forgiveness. For those of us who follow You, help us obey Your leading, understand Your Word, and speak of You with love and courage. Send us into the week attentive to the people You place before us. In Your name we pray, amen.



Matthew 28:19-20