

SAVED IN A CHARIOT

BIBLE TEXT : Acts 8:26-40.

LESSON 292 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Acts 8:26-40

²⁶ And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

²⁷ 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, ²⁸ Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

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

³⁰ And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

³¹ And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

³² The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

³³ In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Miracles Wrought

Powerful sermons had been preached and stirring testimonies given at the great revival in Samaria. A baptismal service, too, had been held, which all reminds us of our annual camp meetings held in Lagos, Nigeria. At the close of camp meeting, the ministers and workers return to their homes to continue their work in spreading the Gospel.

One who had preached in Samaria was Philip, known as the Evangelistic Deacon. We remember that he had been one of those chosen to help look after the affairs of the church. A real Christian is always willing to lend a helping hand, no matter what the need may be.

People with one accord listened to Philip as he preached, and many miracles took place in his meetings: people were set free from unclean spirits, the sick and lame were healed. Philip was the father of four daughters who also preached.

Off to the Desert

One day the angel of the Lord met Philip and told him to go toward the south unto the desert, Gaza. He could have thought, That is a waste of time to go down there; or he could have asked, Why? as children often do. He did not question the command of the angel, but, like Abraham of old, "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). Could we today follow the Lord regardless of circumstances or conditions? Are we willing to say, "Lord, put my plans in reverse if they are contrary to Your plans for me"?

Many a weary mile walked Philip. Perhaps every step he took was by faith. The farther he went, the stronger his determination became. Hotter and hotter became the desert sands, but still deeper into his heart burned the purpose to go where the Lord had sent him.

Few travellers are to be seen along the desert road; but look, yonder rolls a chariot. "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot," whispers the voice of the Spirit to Philip. He runs toward the chariot and finds there a eunuch reading his Bible, as he sits in the chariot. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" he asks. "How can I, except some man should guide me?" is the reply of the man who has charge of all the treasures of the queen of the Ethiopians.

A eunuch is one generally employed for important duties, and no doubt this was a very good man. At Jerusalem he had possibly heard of the sufferings and death of Jesus, which had occurred about a year prior to this time. Yet, as he read from the Book of Isaiah, he did not fully understand that he was reading of Jesus. All the way from Ethiopia he had come to worship God at the Temple in Jerusalem, but he had not found what his heart was seeking. Preacher Philip opened his mouth and preached Jesus, showing the eunuch that Jesus was the One of whom Isaiah the Prophet was speaking.

Our Duty

Although far out on a lonely desert, Philip was prompt to speak a word for Jesus. Are you doing all you can to guide sinners into the way of salvation? Is there a boy or girl in your school who is longing to find Jesus and is saying, like the eunuch, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Let us check up on our life and make sure that not one opportunity is

³⁴ And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

³⁶ 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?

³⁷ And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

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.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

lost to tell others of Jesus. The Lord may be saying to someone today, "Arise, and go toward the south," or, in other words, "Go in the direction that I shall send you in order to reach a hungry soul."

A story is told of a conversation supposedly carried on between Jesus and Gabriel. It seems that they were discussing the plan for spreading the Gospel after Jesus' ascension to His heavenly Father. Jesus told Gabriel that He had left it to the disciples to go and tell the world about Christ. Then Gabriel asked, "But what if they do not do it?" And, as the story goes, Jesus' reply was, "I have no other plan."

Christian friends, it is our duty to tell the story of Jesus to souls in darkness. We do not want to come up to the judgement seat of Christ and have someone whom we have seen daily in school, at work, or on the street, point a finger at us and say, "You did not tell me about Jesus; you did not invite me to church."

Belief from the Heart

On and on rolls the chariot now bearing Philip as well as the eunuch. Suddenly the light breaks in upon the soul of the Ethiopian traveller. Just ahead is a pool or stream of water. "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised?" are the words of the new convert. Philip replies, "if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." It is truly with all his heart that the eunuch can say, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." His joy is full. He has made contact with Him of whom Isaiah had written, "He bares the sin of many" (Isaiah 53:12).

Water Baptism

We are very sure that there were no questions asked as to the mode of baptism, as is the case today. There is only one right way – the Bible way. Although we find in the world different forms of water baptism, if there are any questions concerning this Bible truth one may turn to the Word of God and find the answer there. When one is plunged beneath the water it signifies death and burial and resurrection with Christ (Romans 6:3, 4). Only dead people are buried; and only people who are dead to sin, the world, the flesh and the devil, are eligible for burial in baptism. Jesus was baptised in water by John. His last commission to the disciples was: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

What clearer picture of the proper mode of baptism could be found than is given in Acts 8:38: "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." The next verse reads: "When they were come **up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more."

The Gospel Chariot

The eunuch may have been stunned by the disappearance of Philip, but although he had lost his teacher he had found the Messiah. No more was he in ignorance concerning the Man of Sorrows, of whom he had read. Christ had set his soul free.

The chariot rolled on, now bearing the eunuch to the land of Ethiopia with the Good News of Salvation. The "Chariot of the Gospel" still rolls on speeding forth a message of hope to all. Those who are searching for relief from sin, sorrow and trouble, may join themselves to this chariot and go rejoicing on their way.

QUESTIONS

1. Where was Philip when he was sent to Gaza?
2. Why had the eunuch been to Jerusalem?
3. What was he doing when Philip first met him?
4. Did he seem glad to see Philip?
5. What passage of Scripture was he reading?
6. What great change came into his life?
7. Tell what happened to Philip after he had baptized the eunuch.
8. What important lessons may we learn from this account?