

THREE MEN IN A CHARIOT

Text: Acts 8:26-39

Philip was a preaching deacon! He was one of the first seven deacons chosen (Acts 6:1-7). Not only was he a gifted deacon, he was a gifted evangelist, for he was called, "...*Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven* (Acts 21:8c). Philip was an evangelist in the mighty Samaritan revival spoken of in Acts 8:5-8. It is hard to leave a place where God is blessing you and start all over in a new environment. Obeying the Lord means we must place His guidance over all other feelings, connections and even comforts. Philip's heart was open before the Lord and had already placed himself absolutely at the disposal of God. Perhaps in this famous Bible story, we will find ourselves. Let examine:

I. A MAN

Acts 8:26-30, 31c. The man of whom we speak is a nameless Ethiopian who seems to be in the upper echelon of leadership in all of Ethiopia. "...*Behold, a man of Ethiopia*" (Acts 8:27b). We see a man, not a group of men, just one man. God is interested in every individual. He is a man from Ethiopia. God is interested in all nationalities being saved. One of the great joys of heaven is seeing people gathered from all time from all over the world. "*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*" (Revelation 5:9).

A. THE DETOUR

Acts 8:26. God often takes us on detours. We need to be conscious of that which seems to be "Plan B" is, in actuality, God's "Plan A." Philip was in the midst of a glorious revival in Samaria (Acts 8:5-8; II Corinthians 10:4). People with demonic strongholds were delivered, people were healed and there was "...great joy in that city." It is so difficult to start over when you have such a good thing going, but this is often the way of God.

B. THE DUALITY

Acts 8:27. The Ethiopian of our story is an enigma. As many who served queens in the ancient days, he was made a eunuch. "...And there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men" (Matthew 19:12b). The purpose of this was to assure that there was never even the possibility of intimacy between the queen or the princesses and those who waited on them. We see an interesting twist: this eunuch has risen far above his station in life, much like Daniel. He was said to be in "...great authority..." and in charge of the entire treasury of the queen. So the servant became a great leader in the African country of Ethiopia and appears to be second only to the queen in power.

C. THE DESIRE

Acts 8:27c, 31c: "...and had come to Jerusalem to worship." The Ethiopian eunuch appears to be a devout Jew as many Ethiopians to this day still claim. Believed by many is the story that the Queen of Sheba from this area of the world came to visit Solomon and took back the culture and religion of the Jew with them. By the way, the history of the church tells us that this man under Candice was the proponent and herald of the faith of Christianity to the country of Ethiopia. The Christianity that has held strong to this day among the marauding Muslims is testament to the successful evangelization of one man.

II. SOME MAN

Acts 8:26,27a, 29-32a. The man referred to here is Philip. "*Then the Spirit said unto Philip...*" (Acts 8:29a). The Lord is looking for "some man " to be a guide to the lost, a light in the darkness to show the path of peace to the seeker. May we all be ready to answer like Isaiah to God's penetrating question: "*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me*" (Isaiah 6:8).

A. IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE

Two phrases stand out in Acts 8:26,27, "...Arise, and go..." and "...He arose and went..." True and faithful obedience is always immediate. "Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is *disobedience*. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from Grace" (Thomas a Kempis). May we say with David, "*I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments*" (Psalm 119:60). "*By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went*" (Hebrews 11:8).

B. ILLOGICAL DIRECTIONS

Acts 8:26c: "...Go toward the south...unto Gaza which is desert..." As a rule, deserts are not over populated with people. Philip was in an area teeming with a large population, (people everywhere!) and now God says, "Go to the desert!" Little did Philip realize that he wasn't just winning one man to the Lord; he was winning the missionary to the country of Ethiopia. God never takes us from somewhere unless He is going to place us in a place of greater usefulness to Him. Adoniram Judson worked fifteen hours a day for six years before he won his first convert to Christ. Wouldn't it have been a shame if he had given up? By the end of his life, he was responsible for seeing thirty thousand come to Christ in Burma (now the country of Myanmar). We must trust God when He sends us to the desert. He sent John the Baptist to the desert and he came out of that wilderness to become the forerunner of Jesus. Jesus Himself went to the desert wilderness for 40 days before He began His personal ministry.

C. DIVINE APPOINTMENT

Acts 8:27,28. A man in a chariot reading! Under great conviction and curiosity, the Ethiopian could not wait until he got home to investigate the Scriptures that were prophesying Jesus. God foresaw his interest and He sent Philip to him at just the right time. The Scripture promises, *"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart"* (Jeremiah 29:13). Every time I pass out a Gospel tract or make a witness or give a testimony, I often contemplate that I am a man on a mission...God's mission. I believe I have been sent to bear witness of the Light. It is not my duty to make anyone see the light; it is my duty to make the Light available. *"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe"* (John 1:6,7).

D. EXCITING APPROACH

Acts 8:29b, 30a. *"...Join thyself to this chariot...Philip ran thither..."* This should encourage all of us to be zealous to serve our Lord!

E. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING

Acts 3:30c. To be able to say, *"Understandest thou what thou readest?"* means that one has to be prepared to give an answer from the Scriptures, *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"* (1 Peter 3:15).

III. SOME OTHER MAN

Acts 8:32-34. The "Some Other Man" is the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice how Philip leads the Ethiopian by lifting up Christ (John 12:32). Philip explains:

A. HE IS INNOCENT

Acts 8:32. The Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53:7, 8. The "Some Other Man" of Isaiah 53 is Jesus and He is innocent, taking the place of us who are guilty (Isaiah 53:5, 6).

B. HE DIED

Acts 8:33c. *"...His life is taken from the earth"* (I Corinthians 15:3, 4).

C. HE IS SAVIOR

Acts 8:35. (I Corinthians 1:18-23). This is our message. Christ is to be preached!

Conclusion:

Acts 8:36-39. God plants the desire to be baptized soon after salvation. Scriptural baptism always follows salvation. Baptism is an expression of the profession of our faith.

The salvation experience brings the greatest joy known to any man, woman, boy or girl.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.