

LIVING GODS WILL

The Disciple

PHILIP the EVANGELIST



Philip Baptizes the Ethiopian Eunuch

by Abraham Bloemaert

The Disciple **PHILIP** the **EVANGELIST**

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Born:	Caesarea, Palestine
Died:	Tralles, Lydia
Death:	His death is unknown

He was also known as "**Philip the deacon**"

He was one of the **Original Seven Deacons** of the Jerusalem Church

He gave **Paul** and **Luke** shelter in his home

He had **four daughters** who had the **gift of prophesy**

The other **Philip** is usually distinguished from the disciple of the same name by calling him "**Philip the evangelist**" or "**Philip the deacon.**"

It is often assumed that this **Philip** was one of the seventy-two men whom **Jesus** sent out in **Luke 10:1**, although the Bible doesn't make that connection.

We do know that **Philip** was one of the **original seven deacons** selected to serve in the Jerusalem church (**Acts 6:5**). He was assigned to give food to the poor.

Philip had a heart for evangelism, and, when the "**great persecution**" arose in **Acts 8:1**, **Philip** left Jerusalem to become an evangelist in Samaria (**Acts 8:5–12**).

After the church in Samaria was started, **Philip** was used by the **Holy Spirit** to bring the gospel to an **Ethiopian eunuch**, a member of the court of **Candace**, the Ethiopian queen.

The story of the **Ethiopian eunuch** in **Acts 8** is a marvelous depiction of **God's** role in evangelism.

The story starts with **Philip**, one of the **seven original deacons**, who had just preached the gospel in Samaria (**Acts 8:4–8**). **Philip** was visited by an **angel** who told him to go south to a road that ran from Jerusalem to Gaza, in the desert (**Acts 8:26**).

Philip didn't ask why he was being sent to the middle of nowhere; he just went (**verse 27**). On the road, in a chariot, was the **Ethiopian eunuch**, who was just returning from Jerusalem. The **eunuch** was sitting in his chariot reading the book of **Isaiah**.

The **Spirit of the Lord** told **Philip** to go over and join the chariot, and when **Philip** drew close he overheard the **eunuch** reading from **Isaiah** out loud.

Philip asked the **Ethiopian** whether or not he understood what he was reading. The **eunuch** replied, “**How can I, unless someone guides me?**” He then invited **Philip** to come sit with him in the chariot (**verse 31**).

The passage the Ethiopian eunuch was reading was this:

**“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.
In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth”
(Acts 8:32–33; Isaiah 53:7–8).**

The **eunuch** was wondering whom the prophet was talking about, “**himself or someone else?**” (**Acts 8:34**).

Philip used this opportunity to explain the passage:

This was a prophecy about **Jesus Christ**, who meekly gave His life to save the world. As **Philip** explained the gospel, the **Ethiopian eunuch** believed. When they came to some water by the side of the road, **the eunuch asked to be baptized** (**Acts 8:36**).

Philip agreed to baptize him, and the **Ethiopian eunuch** “**gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him**” (**Acts 8:38**).

As soon as the **Ethiopian eunuch** 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**” (**verse 39**).

Tradition says that the **eunuch** carried the gospel back home to Ethiopia and founded the church there.

Philip found himself at Azotus, and he carried on preaching the gospel on his way to Caesarea (**Acts 8:40**).

Twenty years later, **Philip** is mentioned again, still in Caesarea (**Acts 21:8–9**). **Paul** and **Luke** and others were traveling to Jerusalem, and they stopped at **Philip’s** home in Caesarea. They stayed with **Philip** for several days.

Philip had four unmarried daughters at that time, all of whom had the gift of prophecy. That is the last time the Bible mentions the evangelist **Philip**.

A **eunuch** is a man who has been **castrated** for the purpose of trusted servitude in a royal household (see **Esther 1:10; 4:4**; and **Daniel 1:9**).

A king would often castrate his servants to **ensure they would not be tempted to engage in sexual activity** with others in the palace (specifically, the royal harem) or to prevent their plotting an overthrow (eunuchs were incapable of setting up a dynasty of their own).

Eunuchs have been employed in many civilizations, including the Ancient Middle East, Ancient Greece and Rome, China, Korea, and Thailand. **Jesus** mentions them in **Matthew 19:12**.

There are many elements of **God's** providence and intervention in the story of the **Ethiopian eunuch**.

The account reveals the importance of these three things:

1. the **Word of God**, the **Holy Spirit's** leading, and a human evangelist.
2. In order for a person to accept the **truth**, he must first hear the **truth** preached (**Romans 10:14**).
3. It is **God's** desire that the **truth** be preached everywhere (**Acts 1:8**).

The **Spirit of the Lord** had been preparing the **eunuch's** heart to receive the gospel. As the **eunuch** read **Isaiah**, he began to ask questions, and at just the right moment the **Lord** brought **Philip** across his path.

The field was "ripe for harvest" (**John 4:35**), and **Philip** was **God's** laborer in the field. This was no coincidence. It was **God's** plan from the very beginning, and **Philip** was obedient to that plan.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Acts 8:5 Then **Philip** went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by **Philip**, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed **Philip** as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

Acts 8:26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to **Philip**, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert.

Acts 8:37 Then **Philip** said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both **Philip** and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.



Philip's Baptism of the Eunuch by Rembrandt