

We have seen the progress of the Gospel, from the minimal organization left by Jesus before His ascension into Heaven, from when He continued to build His church as He had promised. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the 120 at Pentecost because the Holy Spirit was to be the Administrator of the Church, given by Christ, to lead the church into obedience to the words of the Apostles that Jesus had given to them.

We have seen the church endowed with this power, fulfilling the promises made to Abraham, to David, and to all the prophets. We have seen the confusion of mind in enemies of the Gospel as they try to contain the damage done every day by the preaching of the Gospel in the Temple and in Jerusalem.

We have seen the beginning of church government, in the role played by the Apostles and the election of deacons for the work of the church. We see the church well supplied with funds so that their mission might be fulfilled that God had given to them; this came from the joyful offerings of the people who gave without grudging or complaining.

We have seen the spreading of the Gospel to Samaria, as Jesus had predicted. The whole structure of paganism and unbelief, represented by Simon the Sorcerer, was swept away like cobwebs by the preaching of Philip and the apostles Peter and John who brought the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, to show that Samaria would not be behind Jerusalem in gifts and power. The whole city was won to Christ.

Today we are going to see the Gospel begin to go further from Jerusalem and from the descendants of Jacob. Until now, the Gospel has been confined to the twelve tribes of Israel. The convert we will encounter today was a proselyte: a true believer in the God of Israel, but not of the seed of Abraham. He was an Ethiopian.

This man came to Christ because of three things, coming together in his life: a Man of God; the Word of God; and the Spirit of God. This would be the ordinary means of the winning of the Gentiles. Before we look at these things, let us look at the man himself.

1. He was a high official in the kingdom of Ethiopia, under Candace, the Queen of Ethiopia. He had great authority and was in charge of all her treasures. He was evidently a man who could be trusted and had great ability.
2. He was a Eunuch. It common in the ancient world to put eunuchs into places of great authority because they could be trust not to steal for their own future and their families future. His ability to beget children was taken from him, probably at a very young age. These eunuchs were really no better than slaves, but enjoyed great authority and wealth and favor if they proved trust worthy.
3. He was a proselyte to the religion of the Jews and came to Jerusalem to worship. As a proselyte, there were two things that would keep him in second degree status in that religion, two things that he could not overcome.
 - a. He was not of the house of Abraham and the promises could not apply to him as they did to a real Israelite. There were also various degrees of strictness to the law of Moses, taught by the scribes, that were applied to proselytes; most were not even

required to be circumcised. In other words, a proselyte was removed at a distance from the “real” house of Israel and the word itself means “stranger.”

- b. He was a eunuch. He could have no children or family. This put him at a further distance from the “true” Jew. He belonged to none of the tribes of Israel.
 4. But he was devout, and humble. He was willing to eat of the crumbs that fell from the table prepared for the children of God. But great joy was to come to him.
 5. He was reading in the prophet Isaiah, in the passage of the Servant of the Lord that includes Isaiah 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 at least. His reading prepared him for the ministry of Philip the Evangelist.
- I. First of All, There came into this man’s life the man of God: Philip the Evangelist. 26-29
- A. God has ordained by the ministry of preaching to save those who believe. Philip only had one man in his congregation on that day, but it was a willing congregation that God had prepared.
 - B. There are three personal things that must characterize the man of God: These are found in Titus 2:12, the things that grace teaches us: “to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”
 1. Soberly: not drunk on yourself: Ro 12:3 “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Young men and women, old men, wives, officers of the church are all called to be sober.
 2. Righteously: Justly and fairly. Sober has to do with yourself; righteously has to do with others. Treat people fairly. The man of God must be fair with people.
 3. Godly: he lives for the glory of God, not for himself or other agendas.
 - C. Philip was this kind of man, having been prepared of God for the work of an evangelist. He was not full of himself; he was a lover of people; he lived for the glory of God, not in pretense but in reality.
 - D. Philip was sent by God. An angel appeared to Philip; and the Spirit said. There was something special about this conversion, and it was attended with great power and authority. The Gospel was going out and fulfilling Isaiah 56, the very passage where the Ethiopian was reading. This was not a chance encounter in the desert. This was destiny for the church and the people of God. Isaiah 56:1-7. The house of prayer for all people: for all people can find the rest of God and offer offerings upon the altar of God. Of course, all these things are understood in the New Covenant and New Testament sense. We do not keep Jewish Sabbaths nor offer animals upon altars. But these things are fulfilled in Christ, and even Eunuchs can enjoy these blessings.
- II. Second: There came into this man’s life the word of God. 28-35 It came through the man of God, for he explained Isaiah to the Eunuch. The Eunuch didn’t get it himself. “I must have someone to teach me.”
- A. You need to be taught by men of God if you are to understand the faith. The Eunuch alone with the prophet Isaiah was not enough.
 - B. Philip must have gone through that whole passage; at least from Isaiah 52 to 56.
 1. The promise to the nation: Isaiah 52:13-15

2. The atonement. Ch. 53
3. The call to the Gentiles 54
4. The call to the thirsty 55.
5. The promise to Eunuchs: Isa. 56, which we just read.

C. God is not only speaking to that Eunuch through Philip, but speaking to the church: The gospel is going to break out of the walls of Israel, out of the bonds of Moses, and go to the whole world. Strangers like this Eunuch are going to follow the apostles, the men of Jerusalem, the citizens of Samaria into the kingdom of God, and great numbers that you cannot imagine will soon follow. In ways that you cannot imagine. Is. 54:2: “Enlarge the place of thy tent... lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” Amen and Amen.

III. The Spirit of God. Vs. 36-40

- A. “I need to be baptized.” Right. As the pledge and promise of the Holy Spirit.
 1. 52:15
 2. 54:8,9 baptism saves us like the waters saved Noah.
 3. 55 all
 4. 57:
- B. Both went down to the water. His uncleanness was taken away by baptism; we do not know if he was a circumcised proselyte, probably not. But now he would not need to be, because he had been baptized and become an heir of Abraham without circumcision, as Galatians 3:27-29 and Colossians 2 tells us.
- C. There is no record of laying on of hands or any extraordinary gift of tongues, or any such thing. The confession of faith is enough. Baptism itself is witness of the promise of the Spirit. He went on his way rejoicing: the beginning of eternal life. Amen and Amen.

Application:

1. All the regular and ordinary work of the church is here in this conversion of the Eunuch. The Holy Spirit in both the minister and the hearer. The word of God carefully explained and understood. The sacrament of the church: baptism. I am sure that when the church was planted in Ethiopia, as it was, and there was certainly other ministers who worked there, the Lord's supper was instituted and officers appointed.
2. This Eunuch was the first fruit of the church in Ethiopia. It is a lesson for us today, that God can use all sorts of instruments to bring to pass His will. He will bypass the unsober, the unrighteous, the ungodly and make use of servants as He will.
3. No apostle had anything to do with this conversion. But the apostles' doctrine did. Philip preached the apostles' doctrine, the doctrine of Christ.
4. Let us be faithful in all things. You will probably not have an angel direct you: this was an extraordinary event that God underscores; but the lesson is the same. Bear witness as you have opportunity, and pray for opportunities for the glory of God. Amen and Amen May God bless you.