

Now Saul was consenting to his death.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

³ As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

⁴ Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. ⁵ Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. ⁶ And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ And there was great joy in that city.

⁹ But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, ¹⁰ to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." ¹¹ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. 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. ¹³ Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

¹⁴ Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰ But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. ²² Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

²⁴ Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."

²⁵ So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

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. ²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

³⁰ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before its shearer *is* silent,
So He opened not His mouth.

³³ In His humiliation His justice was taken away,
And who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth."

³⁴ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to

him. ³⁶ Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, *here is water*. What hinders me from being baptized?"

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."

³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so 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.

Introduction

After Stephen was martyred, which we learnt about last week, great persecution arose against the Church in Jerusalem.

As a result, with the exception of the Apostles, many Christians were driven out of the area.

One of the believers who left Jerusalem was a man called Philip who went to Samaria and continued to serve Jesus proclaiming the Gospel.

Philip was one of the men chosen by the Apostles to serve in the growing Church in Jerusalem. (**Acts 6: v.5.**)

He must have been a friend of Stephen's because they worked together.

I expect Philip was very upset when he discovered that Stephen had been killed for his faith.

Nevertheless he was not discouraged and went off to another country called Samaria to evangelise the people there.

The distance between Jerusalem and Samaria was about 70 km (about 44 miles).

That is a full day's journey.

In the passage that I read there are two different types of evangelistic activity recorded.

The first is speaking to the crowds of people, and the second type is one-to-one personal evangelism to an individual.

I will split up the passage into two sections and deal with each separately.

1. Philip proclaims Christ to the crowds in a Samaritan city – 8: v. 4-25.

It was very bold of Philip to even come to Samaria because the Jews despised the Samaritans.

The Samaritans were Jewish people who had broken away from the main stream Jewish faith in the 10th century B.C.

They eventually formed their own society and even built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. They rejected all the Old Testament scriptures except the first 5 books of the Bible, which were called the book of Moses or the Pentateuch.

In the eyes of Jewish people they were considered heretics and like a cult.

Nevertheless Philip guided by the Holy Spirit, went to Samaria for evangelism.

Luke unfolds the story of what happened there in **5 stages.**

Stage One - Philip evangelises the city. – 8: v. 5-8.

We are told that Philip **proclaimed Christ** to the people of that city and the people listened to his message.

There were signs following the preaching of the gospel.

He exorcized evil spirits and they came out of people with a loud voice.

Many people who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

As a result there was much joy in the city.

When the Holy Spirit is working in great power following the preaching of the gospel, the devil is not far behind.

The devil was working through Simon the Magician.

Stage Two – Simon the Magician professes faith. 8: v. 9-13.

Before Philip arrived in Samaria there was a different spiritual influence.

A man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city. He was a popular person who boasted about his power, making himself like a god.

We are told that this man practised sorcery.

It is important that we understand something about this word and practice because this type of activity is getting very popular and it is very dangerous.
The Cambridge Dictionary definition of the word sorcery is this.

“ A type of magic in which spirits, especially evil ones, are used to make things happen.”

Sorcery is an attempt to bypass God’s wisdom and power and give glory to Satan instead of God. It is the devil deceiving people.

Deut. 18: v. 10-14.

¹⁰There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or a soothsayer*, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹²For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. ¹³You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.

So this man Simon was doing evil things, but no doubt making money and being popular. However when Simon discovered that there was a greater power coming from Philip as a result of preaching the Good News about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, it says that he himself believed and after he was baptised he continued with Philip.

However we will discover later that his belief was only in his head and his heart had not been touched by the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

Stage Three – The Apostles send Peter and John to Samaria. 8: v.14-17.

When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received God’s word, they sent Peter and John to investigate.

We are not told how Peter and John discovered that the Samaritans had received the gospel, and been baptised, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit.

However they definitely discerned that something was missing.

We are told that they had only been baptised in the name of Jesus.

We will look at this challenging situation in a moment.

This text has caused division in the Church so we need to examine it carefully.

Stage Four – Simon tries to buy power. – 8: v. 18-24.

When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he wanted that power for himself.

Simon offered the Apostles money in order that he might receive this power.

Peter seriously rebuked Simon for his request to receive this power through money.

v. 19-24 in the N.L.T.

¹⁹“Let me have this power, too,” he exclaimed, “so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!”

²⁰But Peter replied, “May your money be destroyed with you for thinking God’s gift can be bought! ²¹You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right with God. ²²Repent of your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, ²³for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.”

²⁴“Pray to the Lord for me,” Simon exclaimed, “that these terrible things you’ve said won’t happen to me!”

Notice in v. 24 that Simon didn’t repent, and could not even pray by himself.

He asked Peter to pray for him. He was only concerned about avoiding God’s judgement, not about repenting of his sin and receiving God’s forgiveness.

Stage Five – Peter and John evangelise many Samaritan villages.

Our last stage in the narrative concerns information about Peter and John returning to Jerusalem and evangelising in villages on the way.

Briefly this is the narrative of the text.

We now have to come back to the issue with Philip, the Apostles and the Holy Spirit.

The verses we need to look at are Chapter 8: v.14-17.

It is very important that we understand what is happening here.

If you have a Roman Catholic background, or a Pentecostal background or even an early Charismatic background from the 1980's, then you may have been taught the need for a two stage conversion to the Christian faith.

This is **not correct** according to the **teaching of the New Testament.**

God's word must be interpreted by God's word, not by private interpretation.

Understanding the mind of God, the Jewish cultural thinking and everything about a situation, according to the writer's intention is very important to a correct understanding of the Bible.

Firstly we need to ask two questions about these verses.

1. Do the Apostles go to Samaria to approve the work that Philip has done?
2. Is there something lacking in the establishment of the Christian Church in Samaria?

We need to ask these questions in the context of the development of the Church as Luke teaches it in the book of Acts.

Firstly we need to understand that Luke has perfect understanding of everything that has happened from the very beginning and desired to write an orderly account so that we might know with certainty the things we need to know.

(Luke 1: v.3-4 – paraphrase)

The next thing we need to be reminded about is Acts 1: v.8

Acts 1:8 in N.K.J.

⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Luke gives us a picture of **three developments of the early Christian Church.**

The first development is at Pentecost in Jerusalem.

In Acts Chapter 2 we learnt that there were **visual signs of the Holy Spirit** coming upon the Jews.

These were tongues of fire, and speaking in an unlearned language, the mighty word of God.

The second development was in Samaria which we see before us.

The third development was the Gentiles who were saved and became part of the Church.

We are told that although the Samaritan people had believed and been baptised, the Holy Spirit had not fallen upon them.

We are also told that the Samaritans had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.

There are three important questions to ask here.

1. Is Philip, because he is an evangelist, not able to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit? He certainly had the ability, because he was full of the Holy Spirit himself. (Acts 6: v.3)
The answer is this: God sent the Apostles Peter and John to Samaria to **confirm** that through the Apostles, God had **officially approved** a new level of development in the Church.
God confirmed the new phase by sending the Holy Spirit as a **visual sign of His divine presence.**
This was important so the Jews did not believe that the Church was only for the Jewish people.
God was sanctioning every stage of the development of the Church.
There are others to come as we will see later in the book of Acts.
2. Was the Holy Spirit at work in the Samaritans when they accepted Jesus Christ in faith?
In other words were they born again, or did they need the laying on of hands to get saved?

I am 100% sure that they were born again because of what the New Testament teaches. Here are some verses that prove this.

Acts 2: v. 38

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 16: v. 31

³¹ So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

Romans 10: v.9-13

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

John 3:v.16. – in N.K.J.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

There are probably another 30 plus verses that can prove that sincere belief in your heart to the clear gospel message results in being born again and receiving God’s Holy Spirit.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles was not to save the Samaritans, but to **prove** that they were now the **same as the Jewish believers** who believed at Pentecost.

Remember the Samaritans were already regarded as a Jewish cult and had been rebellious to the Jewish faith in the past.

God needed to do something in a **visual way** to prove that this faith in Jesus and the gospel were the same faith as Pentecost.

3. Why did Philip baptize the Samaritan believers only in the name of Jesus?

Matt. 28: v.18- 19. In the N.K.J.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The emphasis of this formula is on the **name** of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Acts 2: v. 38

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:v.47-48

⁴⁷ “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Acts 19:v. 5. In N.K.J.

⁵ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

There is no issue in the way that Philip baptized people. He was well aware of what he was doing and followed Jesus’ commission.

You may have more questions about these verses but these three are the most popular questions that people ask.

Having said that the Bible **does not teach a two-tier Christian experience for Salvation**, I do believe that many Christians get confused about the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

The Bible teaches about being **FULL of the Holy Spirit**.

(in the Greek language it means “keep on being filled”)This is an on-going work. These experiences of the Holy Spirit are do with your **sanctification** and **not your Salvation**.

Before we leave this section we need to say something about Simon the Sorcerer from v. 18-24.

We are told in v.13 that Simon believed and was baptised.

However in v. 18- 19 we learn that when Simon noticed that after the Apostles had laid hands on people that the Holy Spirit was given, he wanted to buy the ability to have this power with money.

Simon was seriously rebuked by Peter and told that his heart was not right with God.

He was told to repent of this wickedness. Peter said that he was poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.

So what is going on here and what does Luke want us to understand?

I will use three headings to explain the situation.

The first word is “Contrast.”

It is good to compare the account of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5: v. 1-11 with that of Simon the sorcerer.

Ananias and Sapphira were Jewish believers who professed to know Jesus and were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were both Baptised and instructed in the Jewish faith by the Apostles.

They both sinned against the Holy Spirit by purposely deceiving and testing Him. So God took both of their lives as a sign of his displeasure and to keep the Church pure.

In contrast Simon was a Samaritan who had made a verbal confession of his faith and was baptised. However his heart was not right with God.

He did not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This made Simon still in bondage to Satan. He was spiritually blind.

The second word is condition.

Simon was in a serious condition but there was hope for forgiveness.

Peter tells him to “repent” and ask the Lord to forgive him.

Notice what Peter says in v. 22.

(Acts 8:22 in the N.I.V.)

²² Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

(Acts 8:22 in the N.K.J.)

²² Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.

The restriction was not on God’s side but upon Simon’s heart condition.

The third word is Constriction.

Peter in v.23 says some very strong words against Simon.

(Acts 8:23 in N.K.J.)

²³ For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.”

(Acts 8:23 in N.L.T.)

²³ for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.”

Here Peter is referring to passages from the Old Testament where Moses warns the Israelites not to worship other gods and to avoid having a root of bitterness among them. (Deut. 29:18, Hebrews 12:15)

Moses says this in the context of God's unwillingness to forgive sin if there is such bitter poison in their hearts.

Likewise Peter warns Simon not to have the same bitterness in his heart.

Simon was a slave to sin through the bondage of sin.

(Compare Isaiah 58: v.6)

Application here

I must bring in some application here that is important.

In Japan before you become a real Christian you will almost certainly have been involved in worshipping at a shrine or Temple. Your parents or grandparents must have taken you there.

Perhaps you got involved as a teenager and continued to worship at these places? You might even have visited fortune tellers or been involved in occult activity. All of these things bring you into bondage with Satan.

There is a stronghold in your life that only Jesus can break through the cross.

Jesus died that we might all be set free from the power of sin.

It will be a battle but you need to cry directly to Jesus for His help. You need His forgiveness of your sin; only Jesus can set you free from the bondage of sin.

When you come to the retreat, you will hear stories first hand by Hugh Brown on some Yakuza (Gangsters) who have been set free from sin.

God is able to set us free if our hearts will fervently cry to Him.

We now move to the second evangelistic mission involving Philip which was very different to his first one.

Philip proclaims Christ to an Ethiopian. V. 26-40.

We now come to the second section of our passage where God is at work directing Philip, preparing the heart of an Ethiopian, and confirming the Gospel through the scriptures.

Before we study this passage we need a little bit of background into the Ethiopian man and where he came from and why he was in Jerusalem.

The Ethiopia of these days is what we call today, the "Upper Nile".

It was approximately the area stretching from Aswan to Khartoum.

(Show slide of map here)

In the Old Testament Ethiopia is known as "**Cush.**" (see Ezekiel 29: v.10)

The man in question was described as a "**Eunuch.**"

What is a "Eunuch?"

The word normally refers to a keeper of the harem. There was the group of wives that were married and owned by wealthy people or Kings and rulers.

These people usually had their sexual organs disabled so that they could not get up to any sexual activity with all of the wives.

The word can also mean someone who was a government official who worked closely with a female, but not deprived of their male functions.

What we do know from **Deuteronomy chapter 23: v.1** is that "Eunuchs" who had their male organs disabled were not allowed to enter the Temple and participate in Temple worship.

However even if he had his sexual organs disabled then the scriptures do teach that a day would come when foreigners and eunuchs would no longer be excluded from the fellowship of God's people.

(Isaiah 56: v.3-7 from the N.K.J.)

³ Do not let the son of the foreigner

Who has joined himself to the LORD

Speak, saying,

“The LORD has utterly separated me from His people”;

Nor let the eunuch say,

“Here I am, a dry tree.”

⁴For thus says the LORD:

“To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,

And choose what pleases Me,

And hold fast My covenant,

⁵Even to them I will give in My house

And within My walls a place and a name

Better than that of sons and daughters;

I will give them an everlasting name

That shall not be cut off.

⁶“Also the sons of the foreigner

Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him,

And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—

Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,

And holds fast My covenant—

⁷Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,

And make them joyful in My house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices

Will be accepted on My altar;

For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

I personally think that the person in question did have his sexual organs disabled because **Isaiah 56: v. 3-7** is very close to **Isaiah 53** and it would only take a roll of the scroll to get to it, after he was converted.

Philip may even have pointed this out to him.

In any event this man was a court official, probably in charge of all the money in the country.

He worked for the **Queen of Ethiopia**. The name Candace is not a person’s name; it is the title given for the Queen Mother who ruled in place of her son.

The text tells us that the man had **been to Jerusalem to worship** and was returning. I guess because he could not attend inside the Temple he was paying his respects at one of the **Jewish festivals**.

He was clearly a **black African man**, who either had **some Jewish blood** through his mother or was a **convert to Judaism**.

With this introduction in mind, let us engage with the text.

There are several things to note.

1. **God guides through an Angel. – v. 26-27.**

The first thing that we note is that God guided Philip through an Angel.

Although we shouldn’t expect God to guide through Angels every time we want to witness to somebody about Jesus, it can happen even today.

I will be teaching a message on the “Truth about Angels” on the 8thDecember in preparation for Christmas and also because they feature quite a lot in the book of Acts.

You will be very encouraged by this teaching.

The main point of these verses is that Philip is told to get ready for a journey because **God has a job for him to do**.

We are not told where he was at the time, but we do know that the Apostles had returned to Jerusalem. (v.25)

Philip is given specific instructions as to where he must go.

Actually there are two roads from Jerusalem to Gaza. One was the coastal route and the other was the desert route. The Angel was very clear about Philip taking the desert route.

The positive aspect here is that **Philip was obedient to God’s word**.

Today we have the Bible and as we read the Bible God guides us through His Holy Spirit. The question we need to ask ourselves is, **“Am I obedient to God’s word?”**

Illustration

On a human level if I keep asking somebody to do something for Jesus at O.I.C. but they keep saying no, then I will stop asking them.

It is like that with the Holy Spirit. God will give us plenty of work to do if we are obedient to the little things.

Don’t expect an Angel to come knocking on your door and instructing you to go to the mountains of Nara to reach a Japanese man who is reading his Bible but not understanding it, until you have been obedient in the little things.

2. **God prepares the Ethiopian through His word. v. 27-30.**

It was one thing for Philip to be prepared for his journey, but it was another thing for the Ethiopian to be prepared to receive Philip.

We are told in the text that the Ethiopian was sitting in his chariot and reading Isaiah the prophet. (86 pages in a very small Bible)

Perhaps it was purchased on his visit to Jerusalem and he was bringing it back for the Queen’s library? We don’t know but we do know that he was reading Isaiah through a scroll.

One thing to note and that is in those days people always read the scriptures out loud. They never did silent reading like we do today.

It was thought that silent reading caused distraction and reading out loud aided memorization. (this could be true!)

So although the Ethiopian was reading Isaiah, **he was reading it out loud.**

This is why when Philip got near the Chariot that he heard him reading Isaiah. (v.30)

It is one thing to read the Bible, but it is not an easy book to understand, especially the Prophetic books like **Isaiah and Ezekiel.**

This is why God raises up Pastors and teachers, Evangelists, and Sunday School teachers, and small group teachers and disciple parents.

These people are God’s gift for communicating God’s truth.

These people are needed. Are you prepared to become one of these people? (Pause for silence – 30 seconds)

3. **God helps Philip to explain the truth of the scriptures. v. 30-35.**

Philip’s first question to the Ethiopian was, “Do you understand what you are reading?” This was a very good question.

The Ethiopian was reading Isaiah 53: v.7-8.

The text was Isaiah 53: v. 7 and 8.

(in N.K.J.)

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He opened not His mouth;

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,

And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,

So He opened not His mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment,

And who will declare His generation?

For He was cut off from the land of the living;

For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

The verse that Luke quotes speaks of a human sufferer who is led like asheep to the slaughter and like a lamb before the shearer is silent.

The person receives deep humiliation, is deprived of justice, and is killed.

The Ethiopian asks who the prophet is talking about, himself or someone else.

In reply, beginning with that very passage of scripture Philip told him the good news about Jesus.

Philip would have explained that God's Son, Jesus Christ left the Glory of Heaven to come to this world to take the punishment of the sins of people. He was the one who was led like a sheep to the slaughter.

He was the one who was deeply humiliated, deprived of justice and killed.

Yes Jesus did it for my sin and your sin.

However forgiveness is not automatic. The Ethiopian needed to repent of his own personal sin, and he did. Praise the Lord!

The question I need to ask is, **"have you repented of your own sin?"**

Both Philip and the Ethiopian must have travelled a little way down the road and they arrived at an Oasis where there was some water.

The Ethiopian asked to be baptised.

Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may."

He answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Then Philip baptised the Ethiopian.

After this Philip was caught away and the Ethiopian never saw Philip again.

The Ethiopian went away rejoicing.

Philip was found at Azotus and carried on preaching.

This is a true and wonderful story about God at work through Philip in the early Church.

God is still at work in His Church today. Are you willing to be used by God to reach a lost soul in Japan today? There are over 120 million, so there are plenty of people in need.

However we need to be prepared and willing, and God needs to prepare the heart of a person and they need to be willing.

May God help us to be instruments in His hands.