

22b ACTS

Let's resume our study now. In Acts chapter 8, we found Philip on instructions from God. I always like that.

It reminds me of the Blues Brothers. We're on a mission from God. But he literally has this instruction from God and doesn't tell him what it is.

But the word of God that has come to him is clear. And he does what the clear instruction of the word of God says and everything turns out great. So he runs over to this chariot.

I figure it cannot have been going very fast because he doesn't have to be an Olympic runner to overtake it. But you would imagine that this would have been more of a litter type of thing with the poles and the bearers. It may or may not have had wheels.

There may or may not have been animals involved. But it was a conveyance. It was the ancient form of limousine.

And either man-powered or animal-powered with men attending, he is being carried along. So Philip jogs over there and catches up to him. Here's him reading the prophet Isaiah.

Pulls up alongside. The eunuch rolls down the window and says, I'm reading Isaiah here and I don't understand it. Can you help me? He says, sure.

He says, well, climb up. Get in. And so Philip does.

The place in the scripture which he read was this. And then it's quoted. And this is how I know that he had a Greek copy of the scroll.

Because this quote is from the Septuagint. Not from the Hebrew. There's very slight differences here.

And this is the exact Septuagintal version. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

In his humiliation, his justice was taken away. And who will declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth. This, of course, is one of the strongest and clearest of the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

Probably the hardest phrase in this whole thing is the second to the last. Who will declare his generation? What exactly does that mean? What is his generation and why does it need declaring? Who is going to declare? What's the answer to that question? Well, I've seen lots of different takes on this. And I will tell you at the outset that no one can definitively, beyond all shadow of a doubt, say what this means.

Either from the Hebrew or from the Greek. It's fairly clear what the rest of it signifies. But most of this, four of the six lines, talk about the fact that he is unjustly accused.

He is unjustly prosecuted. He is unjustly convicted. And his life is taken from him by judicial proceedings.

And in the ancient world, there are ancient historians, Tacitus and Arian and some of these others, who tell us the way ancient justice worked in these days. And even back before the time of Christ, back into the dark reaches of the ancient Near East, when someone was under prosecution for some sort of offense, real or not, they would do just like they do today. In addition to trying to bring a defense based on facts, they would also bring in character witnesses.

And nearly all forms of court, all forms of justice, would allow you to bring people in who would vouch for you. You could bring in two or three witnesses who would say, well, this man is not capable of this, or he was with us, we were all playing poker, whatever it was, to alibi or to present mitigating circumstances or to say, well, this is the only time this man is fouled up. Go easy on him, whatever.

And in the time of Christ, it was traditional. Even Stephen and some of the other trials that we have recorded in the New Testament, the trials of Paul that you find before Festus and Felix and that, he gets the chance to present a defense. And you remember, Paul at one point says, is one of the few uses of *prognosco* in the New Testament.

He says, if you do not believe that I was an ardent Pharisee and a Hebrew of the Hebrews, ask those who knew me before, *prognosco*, knew me beforehand in Jerusalem. Ask those who knew me before. And that's a very significant statement because in the other place where it says in Romans 8, 29, whom he foreknew, then he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.

There are people, Calvinists, Reformed theologians, who try to read all kinds of extra baggage into the word *prognosco*. Whom God foreknew, they say, well, this means he loved them beforehand. He actually looked down the corridors of time and loved them with a special love and elected them and put *pervenient* grace and did all these other things.

And they read this into the word *prognosco*. *Prognosco* means to know, *pro*, beforehand. Well, Paul uses it and says, I was a real swinging Pharisee, if you don't believe me.

Ask the people who knew me back when, and he uses *prognosco*. Well, he doesn't say they all loved me beforehand. Most of them were his bitter enemies now.

But he says they knew me, and it just means they were aware. They had a knowledge. Well, here in this trial, one of the ways that justice was short-circuited, not only were false witnesses brought against the Lord Jesus, but his right to have his generation

declared, to have his standing declared, to have people come to his defense and speak on his behalf, was denied.

When you look at all of the gospel records of the trial of the Lord Jesus, they never give him the chance to bring in a disciple or an apostle or Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea or anyone else to come in and speak on his behalf. He never has that opportunity, which was standard in that day. And in this prophecy, it is foretold that he is humiliated.

His justice is taken away, and there's no one there to declare his generation. And I think this is probably what the import of this is. It seems to be synonymous with the other forms of injustice that take place when he is led like a sheep to the slaughter, and he opens not his mouth, and no one else opens their mouth on his behalf.

That form of justice is taken away. Another very popular understanding of this is that it speaks of Jesus' origin, his divine virgin birth, and his generation in the sense of his coming into being. Who will declare it? Who can explain it? And that could be, but I don't find that really flowing in this context.

Isaiah 53 is talking about the trial and the injustice that is done to Jesus as the lamb led to the slaughter. Nobody's worried about, well, where did the lamb come from? Who were his parents? Where are his folks? That's really not in view, so while that's possible, I think this is one of the many injustices that Jesus suffered, and it is foretold hundreds of years before his birth and before his trial. The prophet Isaiah wrote this down.

There's not going to be anyone there to declare his generation, to talk about his reputation, his standing, his spotlessness, that he is without spot and without blemish. He is completely and wholly wrongly accused. His life is taken from him.

Well, so now, here we've got this Ethiopian. Great question came up on the break. Sometimes I have to just hold off questions on the break because then I would steal my own thunder and I wouldn't get a chance to... because then I can't remember what I said on the break and what I said in the lesson if I say it twice, and so then I'm messed up.

But here's the thing. Let's think about this Ethiopian. He's a mucky-muck in the Ethiopian world.

He's a high... this is what the word eunuch actually means. It has nothing to do with his physical standing. He is a head of state, a cabinet member, a cabinet member for a head of state, this queen, this candace of the Ethiopians.

And yet he has, for some reason, left Ethiopia or whatever Ethiopian territory or sub-territory to come up to Jerusalem and worship. Why? Why does this guy know anything about the God of Israel? Why does he want to go to Jerusalem and worship? Well, there is kind of a parallel here because who does he... why do we have this information? It just doesn't say an important Ethiopian came up. It tells us all about Candace.

What's unusual about her? Well, in this day and age that we're looking at, most of the heads of state are of what gender? They are male. They are Caesars. They're pharaohs.

They're kings. She's a queen. When's the last time we had a famous queen of the south show up? Queen of Sheba.

In fact, Sheba wasn't a place. It's not like you could go down there and find the great kingdom of Sheba. Sheba is Shaba or Saba in Hebrew and all the other cognate languages of that time.

Saba means south. She's queen of the south. Well, Candace is another queen of the south.

There are strong traditions. In fact, some people even see this in Psalm 45, if you want to look that up later. I think they had a movie here recently that pictured these strong traditions in Africa and elsewhere in that region.

That the queen of Sheba came up, that she and Solomon got together, had a hot date, and that she went back and actually had a son by Solomon who came to prominence in his mother's kingdom and so on. She took the word of God back with her and there came to be a God-fearing community. They weren't necessarily Jewish, but non-Jewish worshippers of the God of Israel are called God-fearers in the scholarly literature.

And that this was something like what Daniel did with Chaldea, in that there were copies of the scriptures that were studied and people who came to faith in the God of Israel outside the land. And that this colony and this tradition survived for many generations. And the Magi, the wise men, who come looking for the one born king of the Jews, are part of this community that was originally started in Daniel's day, under Daniel's tutelage.

And the idea is, it is possible that these Ethiopians, by the way, I don't want to go down an entire rabbit trail, but you may be aware of the fact that there are Jews that they have done a big DNA project on to identify and import into Israel today. There was a great airlift and a lot of money spent because these have a legitimate claim to citizenship in Israel because of their heritage. They are Ethiopian Jews, if you will.

That's a whole other subject. Suffice it to say, the Word of God went with the Queen of Sheba back to the South. And here is a man from the South, a thousand years later, coming up, worshiping in Jerusalem.

It's equally possible that by some other means he heard of God and came to faith. Whatever it is, there seems to be more than passing resemblances between Candace, who is mentioned by name in Scripture, and that is usually for a reason, and the Queen of the South in Solomon's day. And then here is this Ethiopian, whose name, by the way, is not mentioned.

At least her title is. So, at any rate, he says, I need someone to guide me in this Scripture reading. And they read this thing about the sheep to the slaughter.

Now, what is the most important thing for someone to know in this age? It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a huge mistake, in my opinion, to have a Bible study and invite unbelievers. I've known people that did this.

I've known people that wanted me to help them do it. And it's a waste of time. There's only one issue for an unbeliever, and it is not explaining the Bible.

The Bible is not for unbelievers. The Bible does not address itself to unbelievers. There is not a book in the Bible that is aimed at unbelievers.

Not one. Think hard. Can you name one book in the Bible, one chapter in the Bible, that is addressed to unbelievers? I might take that back on the chapters.

You do have some woe songs to the pagan nations over in Isaiah and Ezekiel and that. But there is no book of the Bible that is addressed to unbelievers. The Bible is for believers.

The Old Testament is for Israel. The New Testament is for the church. It's for believers.

What is the issue for someone who has no relationship with God? It's not the Bible. It's Christ. There is one and only one question.

You have three issues and one question. The three issues are sin, righteousness, and judgment. Sin exists.

We are all corrupt and fallen, and we all deserve destruction in the lake of fire. That is a given fact. Righteousness means there is a righteous God who does exist, who is going to do something about sin in the universe, and He's going to do it on the day of judgment.

Sin, righteousness, and judgment. Three issues, and there is one question with one right answer. What do you think of Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

No man comes to the Father except through Him. You cannot solve the sin problem by your efforts, by your deeds, by your intentions, by your striving and traving. You can wear a hair shirt.

You can whip yourself. You can crawl through a thousand yards of ground glass. You can crawl up and down the steps of mosques and Mecca and do all these other things.

It's totally useless. God is not impressed. There is only one thing that impresses God in terms of mankind's fallen condition, and that is the complete, entirely sufficient work of Christ on the cross.

You either have it or you don't. If you don't have it, you are going to the lake of fire for all eternity. If you have it, you will dwell with God for all eternity.

It's just that simple. That is the gospel. So, here is an Ethiopian who is coming up and worshipping God.

Is he a believer or an unbeliever? He is a believer. He believes in God. He went up there to worship, right? What kind of believer? Remember, Acts is the transitional book.

We are in that fade from one dispensation to another. And he starts out as a believer in the Old Testament economy. If he had died of heat stroke in his chariot before Philip got there, he would be resurrected with the Old Testament saints.

He would be heir of the Old Testament covenant promises, as would any of these other people who expired before they heard of Jesus Christ and were believers in God. So, he is about to undergo a conversion of covenant relationship. This happens to your insurance sometimes.

You can convert it. You change jobs and you get COBRA or whatever. You convert from one policy to another.

You convert from one plan to another. You can convert your retirement account. You can convert all kinds of things from one thing to another.

The first one has to exist before you can do a conversion. A lot of software companies. You can upgrade.

You can convert to a new version, but you have to have an existing copy of the software. You can't buy the upgrade, in most cases, and just start with that. You have to have an existing installation, and then you upgrade.

You convert. You move over. This is what this guy is going to do.

By the way, that is what is going to happen to Saul on the road to Damascus. He doesn't get saved on the road to Damascus, but he does jump the dispensational line from being an Old Testament saint to being a New Testament Christian. This man, who is an Old Testament believer, is looking at his Old Testament scriptures because that is a legitimate thing for a believer to do.

Study the scriptures. That is what he is doing. He says, I've got this prophecy here, this passage, talking about the sheep to the slaughter with no justice.

Is the man who wrote this talking about himself, or is he talking about someone else? That is his question. Is this Isaiah? Is he the suffering servant? Nobody wants to look down on the Ethiopian eunuch or anything, but you think, well, how did he come up with this question? Why is he asking if it is the prophet talking about himself or someone

else? Listen, you look at Israel today, and when they go to Isaiah, and they read the suffering servant passages, they think it is the nation of Israel. They think that the suffering servant is the people of God.

They can't discern, they can't see that it is the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because they are unbelievers. They are unsaved.

They are lost, hellbound, as good as pagan, lost people. Being Jewish does you no cotton-picking good in this age. I don't know how to say it any plainer.

There are people who wrassle and say, oh, don't the Jews? No, they don't. If they don't know Christ, they're going to hell. It's just that simple.

This age, there is one way to get to heaven, and it is faith in Christ. If you do not believe in Christ, you are a hellbound sinner. That's what Scripture says.

There isn't any way to sugarcoat it. See, I'll tell you the reason I'm kind of hot on this. I just saw something.

I'm sorry if I'm a little emphatic there. There's a new sort of theological thought that has come blimping out of the air, floating down on a cushion of hot air, that says that you can be ignorantly saved. You can be unconsciously saved.

In other words, maybe you don't really know the details about Jesus, but you just sort of believe in God, and you kind of trust in God, but maybe you live in Borneo, or you're off in a cave on Mount Fuji, or you're down in the wilds of Brazil somewhere, and you never got to read a New Testament, but you've got a warm, fuzzy feeling about God, and so the work of Christ is applied on your behalf because you're positive toward God. Even though you didn't get the details of Jesus, God takes His work and applies it to you anyway. In other words, you don't have to know about Jesus per se.

You just have to be kind of warm and fuzzy toward God, and you'll be saved anyway. See, under this plan, Muslims can be saved because they believe in the one God, Abraham's God, Allah, and they've got a lot of details screwed up, but hey, they're really so dedicated and religious and all, and so God can apply the work of Jesus, even though they haven't technically said, well, Jesus is my Savior. The redeeming work is still there and can still be applied.

Well, this is a lie from the pit of hell. This is a complete dissemblance, but it makes sense to people because it's kind of politically correct, and it's the gentle Jesus walking through the field of daisies, holding everybody's hand with a child in His lap, and, oh, come to me, all ye that labor. People just blind themselves.

I don't know how you can read your Bible and come up with this, but people do. Listen, what does the Scripture say? He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of

God hath not life.

The wrath of God abideth on him. You just can't get any plainer than this, right? So the only time you can be saved and not know about Jesus is before Jesus came. Hebrews 11.6, the Old Testament model of salvation, he that comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

They didn't know the name Jesus. Jesus hadn't come yet. They didn't understand all the details of the Incarnation looking forward.

They looked through a glass darkly. They didn't have much information, but they put their faith in God, just like Philip. God says, Go to the desert.

Philip goes. Now get the details when I get there. Well, now Christ has come.

Now it is plain. Now you have no excuse for not knowing. If you're interested, God will get you the information about Christ.

And if you do not accept Christ, you can say all you want to about the one God, Allah, and you're going to be saying it in the lake of fire. Because if you don't have Christ, you're lost. So this man is looking at his scriptures.

He's an Old Testament saint, and he sees this sheep to the slaughter thing. He says, Well, now, what is the fulfillment of this? Was it fulfilled when Isaiah died, or did he come to a bad end, or is he talking about someone else? Well, this is a great opening for Philip. Notice, by the way, the man would have been reading Isaiah regardless.

God brings Philip to the man who is ready. Philip does not walk the streets of Jerusalem, see a foreigner, and tackle him, and say, Let me give you the gospel. This is the modern model of evangelism, where people look around for some unsuspecting victim that they can back up into a corner and shout the gospel into their face and wear them down until they say yes, just to get you off their back.

This is not the biblical model. God will bring the man with the information to the person who wants to know. Is that crystal clear? God will go to great lengths.

But notice, God did not move the eunuch to Philip. God moved Philip to the eunuch. Unbeknownst to Philip, Philip had no idea why he was going.

God said, You need to be in a certain place at a certain time, and it will all be clear when you get there. And it was. And Philip was ready.

He was not bashful. He asked the right question. Do you understand what you are reading? Do you need any help? The man says, Yes, please.

Come up into my chariot. Explain this to me. He is asking.

He is seeking. He is knocking on the door. And here is a believer, a knowledgeable believer, who understands his faith, who can give him answers.

This is the biblical model for both evangelism and for speaking the truth in love between believers. So the eunuch answered Philip and said, I ask you. This is what we should be listening for.

If someone does not say, I ask you, we should be a little reserved. We should respect people's right to decide to go their own destructive way. God gave them free will.

God gave them a mind. God has given them opportunity. God has sent them the Holy Spirit.

If they are not listening and responding to God the Holy Spirit, I promise you they are not going to listen and respond to us. We are not one thousandth as eloquent as God the Holy Spirit. If someone can listen to God and say, No, I'm not interested, do you really think there is any point in us trying to argue them into salvation or into living a life of faith? It is totally and completely pointless.

In fact, you can delay someone. God may be working on them in other ways. We need to be ready always to give an answer when someone asks.

Look at what the man says. I ask you, Philip. Of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or some other man? Philip opened his mouth and beginning at this scripture preached Jesus to him.

Here is something else. What is the content of Philip's preaching? It is the scripture. He gives the man scripture.

The Bible does not say, The word of a righteous man is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. It does not say, Behold, when you stand before kings and people and speak about me, your words will pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow. If you want to be effective, if you want to truly be helpful, if you genuinely love someone and want to do the best you can for them, give them the word of God.

Even if they don't like it at the time, maybe they ask the question. My dad used to say this when I was growing up. Why do you ask me questions and then argue with my answers? If you are asking me the question, here is the answer.

Quit bugging me about it. Well, sometimes people ask the question and they don't like the answer. But Philip gives him scripture.

And the great thing about this is, if you give someone the word of God and they don't like it, they've got to take it up with God. I didn't write the Bible. These things we've

been talking about in this lesson, I didn't make this up.

It's not the gospel according to Sam. This is the gospel according to the word of God. If someone says, I really think that's unfair that you have to believe in Jesus.

Why can't you just be warm and positive toward God in general and be saved? I really think that's unfair. Limiting it down. Why can't there be many roads to God? All I can say is, take it up with God.

It's His plan. It's His salvation. All of us deserve hell.

This is the way that He has chosen to let some of us who are willing to accept it be saved. So, if you don't like the plan, go to the planner. But don't bother me.

I'm just telling you what the word of God says. Philip opened his mouth, beginning at this scripture, preached Jesus to him. The gospel is Jesus.

The gospel is not, here is God's plan. It's a big band-aid. It's a big excedrin pill.

Here's the way to get over your pain. Here's a way to not be lonely. Here's a way to solve your problems.

Here's a way to fill in all of the gaps and voids in your unhappy, dismal life. Come to God and He'll fix it all for you. He didn't preach a better life.

He didn't preach happiness and joy. He preached Jesus. Jesus is the Lamb.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Many of these other things will come as blessings, but that's not the gospel. The gospel is you are lost, you are headed for hell, and it is only the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross that makes any impression at all on the righteousness and justice of God.

If you claim that work, if you are washed in the blood of the Lamb, you can stand before God on judgment day and be waved in. Otherwise, it's over. There is no other way.

Philip opened his mouth, beginning at this scripture, preaching Jesus to him. Now, as they went down the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, Behold, water. He just says two words.

Idu, behold, water. You can just scratch out the here is. He says, look, water.

What hinders me from being baptized? Now, what did Philip just get through preaching? Jesus. What does this man say? Water, baptized. Where does he get this information? Was it in the gospel that came from Philip? No, it was not.

How does he know about baptism and water? Because he is a proselyte. He is a God-fearer, at a minimum. He knows about the religion of the Jews.

And where is the origin of baptism? It's before John the Baptist, the mikveh. We talked all about that at the beginning of Acts. He knows about water and what it signifies.

The signification of water baptism is, I am renouncing a former way of life. I am dedicating myself to a new way of life. It is a picture of washing away, dying to the old, coming up newborn to the new.

It is a picture of what happens. It was a great teaching tool. How many books of the New Testament does Philip have in his pocket here? Does he have any of the gospels? No.

Does he have the book of Acts? No. He is in the book of Acts. He couldn't have it.

Does he have any of the epistles of Paul? Paul is still Saul and is still hounding the church at this point. Does he have the epistles of Peter, the epistles of John? Does he have anything? No. So, how do you teach? How can you convey truth in this interim period? There are miraculous signs.

There are miraculous pronouncements that come from people that God specially gives during this provisional time. And there is this ritual of water baptism that is borrowed, if you will, from the proselyte to Judaism process and is invested with new meaning. They say, you remember this baptism thing we used to do when you became a Jew? Well, think about it this way.

You are dying to the old man. You are buried with Christ. You are raised to new life.

The death you die, you die to sin. The life you live, you live to God. That is their wordless book.

That is their New Testament until these books can be written down. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, right now, without a completed New Testament, we only know in part and we teach, we prophesy in part. When that which is complete is come, this partial stuff will be done away.

And what does he say is partial? Prophecy will stop. Tongues will stop. These other things, these miraculous gifts will cease.

He also says to people getting all hung up on baptism, he says, I'm glad I didn't baptize any of you. God didn't send me here to baptize. He sent me here to preach.

Well, his preaching is in the New Testament. Now that we have the New Testament, the temporary, the stopgap New Testament, which, among other things, included water baptism, is no longer necessary. We've got something far better than a ritual.

We have the complete canon of the New Testament. So if you wonder why we don't do water baptism, this is why. Our baptism is in the Scripture.

Our baptism is of the Spirit. Now, if someone wants to be water baptized, it's just like the guy says here. Look, water.

What hinders me from being baptized? Not a thing. Somebody wants to be water baptized, I will baptize them. They can get baptized anywhere else.

Happy to do it. There's no harm in it. You can use it just the way the first century church did to make a great teaching point.

But it is not a requirement. There's nothing special about it. It doesn't do anything for you.

You don't get one step higher on the heavenly ladder having done it. It was a teaching tool. You can celebrate a Seder if you want to and learn some interesting things about the way the Jews understood the law.

I think the animal rights people might get you if you go out and try to do an animal sacrifice. But you can do an animal sacrifice or watch one being done. They do animal sacrifices for the hajj, the Muslims.

My gracious, there were some 60,000 lambs or something. They slaughter all in one week. They've got this assembly line thing, but they're all sacrifices.

Each one has to have a lamb sacrifice. They showed the sacrifice from the beginning. They took a live sheep, hacked its neck, blood.

It's better than a packing plant. Then they take all these animals and ship them out to underprivileged people. It's a wonderful, charitable thing that they do.

They're still all going to hell. Anyway, the point here is you can do an animal sacrifice and glean some teaching points from it if it were somehow permissible. But it doesn't do anything in God's sight.

Our baptism is of the Spirit. What did John the Baptist say? He says, look, I baptize you with water. This is a great teaching tool for me, but the one that comes after me is so much higher than me, I can't even touch his shoes.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. If you want to go back to the baptism of John, great. But people who got baptized with the baptism of John didn't receive the miraculous manifestation of the Spirit.

It's when they heard the word of Jesus, when the apostles came and got face-to-face with them, laid hands on them, then that's when they got the baptism of the Spirit. That's the baptism we are heirs to. That's the one we want.

So don't get concerned that, well, if the Ethiopian got baptized, I should get baptized

also. Remember the time that we're in. We also don't have all things in common.

We're not going to get struck dead like Ananias and Sapphira. We're not going to speak in tongues. We're not going to have flames of fire on our heads.

There's lots of things in Acts that were great for then, but don't happen now. Behold, water. What hinders me from being baptized? Philip said, if you believe with all your heart, you may.

He answered and said, verse 37, just cross it out. It's not even in the original. Philip did not say, if you believe with all your heart, you may.

The Ethiopian eunuch did not say, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Some later guy thought that this needed to be in there because you shouldn't be getting baptized unless you're truly saved and you really believe, and it got added in later. This is manifestly and completely a later addition.

It's got all the authenticity of the ending of Mark. Just cross it out. Verse 37 is not there.

This man was already saved. Yes, he has recognized Christ in the Gospel of Philip, and he wants to acknowledge that and picture that in water baptism, and Philip does so. He says, what hinders me from being baptized? And the implicit answer to that question is nothing.

You're there. Philip doesn't say, well, you need to make a public profession of faith. See, people will come to this passage and say you need to walk the aisle.

You need to confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, or you're not really quite there yet. Well, this is one of the ways the devil has gotten his finger into the Bible, I think. So cross out verse 37.

What hinders me from being baptized? He commanded the chariot to stand still. Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. By the way, if you were going to do water baptism, it is by immersion.

They went down into the water. They came up out of the water. Philip didn't go out there and get a handful of water and throw it at his head.

He didn't sprinkle it over him. He didn't effuse him. What does it say? It says they got out.

They went down into the water. He baptized them. They came up out of the water.

It's amazing that people could possibly think that there's some other kind of baptism than immersion. Beats me. Now, when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord... Now, isn't this something? When's the last time we saw the details of a water

baptism in Scripture? Luke volume 1, right? The Lord Jesus got baptized.

What happened straight away when He came up out of the water? The Holy Spirit is the very next thing you see. Here, baptized, comes up, Holy Spirit appears. There is a pattern to this, and this is analogous to the laying on of the Apostle's hands.

There is no Apostle on site, but the decision and the acknowledgement that the Ethiopian man makes in saying, I am dedicating myself to this Christian life. I accept Christ as the Messiah, as this foretold Lamb of Isaiah. It all makes sense.

The Spirit of the Lord appears on the scene. And it says it caught Philip away so that the eunuch saw him no more. And he, the eunuch, went on his way rejoicing.

Why is he rejoicing? He's no longer frustrated. The Scriptures make sense. The Spirit is there.

He doesn't need Philip to explain anymore, because the Holy Spirit will now lead him into the truth. And guess what? It's the very same Spirit that you have. It's the very same Spirit that I have.

It's wonderful to have someone to help us and to guide us, who can take the time to study and learn something about languages and research in the commentaries. But do not think that you have to wait for somebody else. The reason God gives each one of us the Holy Spirit is each one of us can glean wonderful truth and encouragement from the Scriptures.

God has given us copies of the Bible. We ought to be opening it up. I was visiting with an individual the other day, and just in passing.

I've known this person quite a while. And we were looking something up, and their Bible came out. And as they were closing it, I saw a page in the front.

I said, wait a minute, can I see that again? I opened it up. And there were lines in there. This person, they were dates of Old Testament and New Testament.

And this person in this Bible alone has read it cover to cover 34 times. There were 34 notations of when they started, when they finished the Old Testament, when they started, when they finished the New Testament. And this person is on time 35 going through.

And that's just in this Bible. There was a previous Bible that the covers got worn off, and there were notations in it as well. So they don't know exactly how many times they've been through.

But in this Bible alone, 34 times and counting. And I will tell you that this person is one of the great, stable, focused believers that I know. And yes, they go to church.

And yes, they listen to a pastor. But every morning, without fail, the first thing that happens is that Bible comes out. And chapters get read.

And there's fellowship with God. And there's prayer. And it's a great model.

It convicts me. My study is consistent but haphazard. I don't have a particular time.

I just catch as catch can. And it happens every day, but I don't know when it's going to be. But I admire that consistency.

And you can see the fruit of it in life. We have the Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord is with us, and He's there for a reason.

So it's a wonderful encouragement. Well, we've got more to say about this. I have some fascinating details I'll have to save for next time.

But let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the great pictures that You place in Your Word, the truths that are here for us to glean and to learn from. We ask that God the Holy Spirit will illuminate our hearts and press these truths on us in such a way that we will be motivated to live in a way that is pleasing in Your sight.

We will apply them and reflect the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray it in His name. Amen.