



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V28 N18

May 3, 2026

POWER AND PURPOSE

“Rise & Go”

Acts 8:26-40

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Evangelism

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:8



Is evangelism necessary?

The connection of Acts 8:26-40 to the Central Practice of Evangelism is obvious. Immediately following Luke’s references to the fact that “there arose . . . a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” (Ac 8:1), and “Saul was ravaging the church” (v. 3), he writes: “Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word” (v. 4). Philip – later called “the Evangelist” like John was called “the Baptist” – was one of those who were scattered. His encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch is a specific example of the general statement, “those who were scattered went about preaching the word.” On verses 26-40, one commentator writes: “*This is an excellent example of the Spirit of God using the Word of God through a man of God to bring salvation to the elect of God (cf. 1 Pet. 1:23-25)*” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Acts,” 2026 ed., 194, italics added, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf).

Regarding the Spirit’s involvement in the story: “An angel of the Lord,” serving as God’s mouthpiece, was “functionally equivalent to the Spirit, who continued to lead Philip throughout the story (vv. 29, 39)” (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 232). He directed Philip to head toward Gaza where he turned left onto the international coastal highway that ran along the Mediterranean Sea, connecting Damascus and Egypt. Only as the road left Gaza did it pass through the desert, the modern Gaza Strip (v. 26). Next, the Spirit directed Philip to join himself to a particular chariot, the eunuch’s – one of many that might have been on the road to Ethiopia on that day (v. 29). Finally, the Spirit of the Lord transported Philip to Azotus from where he preached the gospel “to all the towns until he came to Caesarea” (v. 40).

Regarding the use of God’s word in salvation: When Philip approached the Ethiopian seated in his chariot, he heard him reading

aloud from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 53, verses 7 and 8. Having been to Jerusalem to worship, the man had clearly been prepared by the Spirit to read and understand what Isaiah had written. So when he lobbed the softball question, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Philip swung for the fences, explaining to him “the good news about Jesus” (v. 35). The Spirit of God uses the word of God to save people. When Philip and the Ethiopian came to the last water before entering the desert, there was no reason why the man should not be baptized for the only prerequisite for baptism is faith in Jesus.

Regarding the involvement of Philip as an evangelist: God uses witnesses, both men and women, to share the gospel message in order for others to believe (Ac 1:8; cf. Mt 28:19-20). Following the beginning of persecution against the church, the apostles remained in Jerusalem but the disciples of Jesus were scattered, and everywhere they went they went preaching the gospel. Later, Paul makes the need for evangelism perfectly clear by writing: “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Ro 10:14).

Regarding the elect of God, the objects of salvation: The elect are believers whom God chooses to save “according to foreknowledge.” The apostle Peter opens his first letter with the following salutation: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are *elect* exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you” (1Pe 1:1-2, italics added). Of course, those whom God chooses to save must also chose to be saved by believing in Jesus Christ. Even the elect are not saved until they believe the gospel.

Read Acts 8:26-40

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

*"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.*

33 In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

34 And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "Philip" in v. 26.
- Circle "Ethiopian" in v. 27.
- Circle "eunuch" in v. 27.
- Circle "Candace" in v. 27.
- Circle "worship" in v. 27.
- Bracket "and he rose and went" in v. 27 and "So Philip ran to him" in v. 30.
- Highlight the phrases "an angel of the Lord said", "the Spirit said", and "the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away" in vv. 26, 29, and 39 respectively.
- Bracket all of vv. 32-33 and write Isaiah 53:7, 8 in the margin.
- Bracket the eunuch's question in v. 34.
- Underline "Then Philip . . . told him the good news about Jesus" in v. 35.
- Bracket the eunuch's question in v. 36.
- Underline "They both went down into the water . . . and he baptized him" in v. 38.
- Box "But" indicating *contrast* in v. 40.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What do you think Luke wanted his readers *to know* by telling this story (1:8; cf. 2:14; 8:1, 4-5, 14, 25, 26, 40)?
 2. Describe the divine guidance Philip received before speaking to the Ethiopian man and how he responded to it.
 3. What passage was the Ethiopian man reading when Philip ran to him, and what does that tell you about the man?
 4. What *exactly* do you think Philip told the man about Jesus?
 5. What do you think Luke wanted his readers *to do* (if anything) by telling this story?
 6. Explain what the implied answer to the man's question in verse 36 is and why.
 7. What *mode* of baptism is suggested by verses 38-39?
 8. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 40.
 9. That day was a big day for the Ethiopian. How so?
 10. **Discussion.** Discuss what you think Luke wants his readers *to be* by telling this story.
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Commentary On The Text

“Luke recorded this incident in order to show the method and direction of the church’s expansion to God-fearing Gentiles who were attracted to Judaism at this time. The Ethiopian eunuch had visited Jerusalem to worship, was studying the Old Testament, and was open to instruction by a Jew. Therefore he was much more sympathetic to the Christians’ gospel than the average Gentile. This man appears to have been the first full-fledged Gentile that Luke recorded being evangelized in Acts, though he could have been a diaspora Jew” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Acts,” 2026 ed., 187, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf).

Before taking a close look at Acts 8:26-40, comments on Philip are in order. Philip, the evangelist—not Philip the apostle—is first mentioned in Acts 6:5 along with Stephen and five others, who were chosen to address the tension between Hellenists and Hebrews in the church. One commentator explains: “The basic distinction between the Hebrews and Hellenists appears to have been linguistic. Those who could speak a Semitic language were Hebrews, and those who could not were Hellenists . . . Within Judaism, frequent tensions arose between these two groups, and this cultural problem carried over into the church . . . The Hebrews and the Hellenists had their own separate synagogues in Jerusalem. But when they became Christians they came together in one fellowship. As the church grew, some of the Christians believed that the church leaders were discriminating against the Hellenists unfairly (cf. Eph. 4:31; Heb. 12:15). The complaint arose over the distribution of food to church ‘widows’ (cf. 2:44-45; 4:32–5:11)” (Constable, 139, 140). Philip was one of the seven Spirit-filled Hellenists chosen to correct the problem.

In order to more fully appreciate the significance of what happened in Acts 8:26-42, one has to go back to Acts chapter 1. In their last conversation with Jesus before his ascension, the disciples questioned whether their resurrected Messiah would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel (v. 6). Rather than answer them directly, Jesus focused their attention on the commission he had already given them (Mt 28:19-20). “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Ac 1:8). Acts 8:26-40 proves his words were truly prophetic.

What’s more, his words affirmed that he did not come merely to provide salvation for those in Jerusalem, nor simply for his fellow Jews in Judea. In fact, his salvation extended to the Samaritans, whom the Jews richly despised, and beyond the Samaritans, it extended to people from every nation on earth. The Ethiopian served as a good example of someone from “the ends

of the earth” for Ethiopia was a distant, mystical place as far as those living in that day were concerned.

The “Ethiopia” mentioned here “was a flourishing culture from the eighth century B.C. until the fourth century A.D. referred to in the Old Testament as the Kingdom of Cush. This remote, advanced culture was an object of endless curiosity for the Greeks and Romans and represented for them the extreme *limits* of the civilized world. Additionally, in Homer’s *Odyssey* (1.23) he referred to Ethiopia as ‘the ends of the earth’ (compare with Acts 1:8)” (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 223). One can only imagine how filled with awe the apostles, who personally heard Jesus’ instructions in Acts 1:8, were after hearing of Philip’s encounter with and the conversion of this Ethiopian eunuch under most miraculous circumstances.

As far as the “good news about Jesus is concerned” (v. 35), Philip no doubt told him the same message he had shared before (v. 5), the same message Peter, the apostles, and Stephen had shared. “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know — this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified . . . Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:22-24, 32-33, 36, 38).

Another aspect of this story which can’t be overlooked is how God, at just the right time, intervened in both of their lives to bring forth salvation to the eunuch. In verse 26 we read that, “an angel of the Lord” instructs Philip to “get up” and “go south” (NASB1995, NET). While he almost certainly would have passed by others, it was the eunuch’s chariot that the Holy Spirit instructed Philip to “go to” and “stay near” in verse 29 (NIV). “The conversion of the Ethiopian was planned not by Philip but by God, who used his messenger, followed by the Holy Spirit to bring together the evangelist and the Gentile already interested in the Scriptures” (C.K. Barrett, *Acts 1-14*, ICC, 422). This story concludes with the Holy Spirit miraculously transporting Philip to the city of Azotus to continue preaching the message of Jesus Christ; once again, in accordance with God’s perfect plan and in his perfect timing.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 26 *an angel* "Angel of the Lord" occurs four other times in Acts (5:19; 8:26; 12:7, 23). "Whenever Luke introduced 'an angel of the Lord' (Gr. *angelos kyriou*) into his narrative, he desired to stress God's special presence and activity (Luke 1:11; 2:9; Acts 12:7, 23; cf. Acts 7:30, 35, 38; 10:3, 7, 22; 11:13; 12:11; 27:23)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Acts," 2026 ed., 187-188, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf).

v. 26 *Philip* Not the apostle Philip (Ac 1:13) but Philip, the evangelist (8:4-40).

v. 27 *Ethiopian* "Ethiopia is to the south of Egypt (Ezek. 29:10) and is known as Cush in the earlier books of the OT (Gen. 2:13). It is in what today is known as the Sudan, and it was in the Nubian kingdom, whose capital was Meroë" (Darrell L Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 341).

v. 27 *eunuch* "In the ancient world, slaves were often castrated as boys in order to be used as keepers of the harem and the treasury . . . So widespread was the practice of placing them over the treasury that in time the term 'eunuch' became a synonym for 'treasurer' and did not necessarily imply that the one bearing the title was castrated. In the present passage it is likely that Philip's Ethiopian was an actual physical eunuch since the terms 'eunuch' and 'official over the treasury' are both given (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 223-24).

v. 27 *worship* "The eunuch was probably a 'God-fearer,' a Gentile who worshiped Israel's God but had not become a full convert ('proselyte'). As a eunuch, he would have been barred from the inner courts of the temple, which makes his reading 'the prophet Isaiah' (v. 28) especially significant. Isaiah held out the promise that God would grant devout eunuchs a heritage 'better than sons and daughter's (Isa. 56:3-5)" (*ESV Study Bible*, note on Ac 8:26-27).

v. 27 *Candace* "'Candace,' according to Pliny the Elder, was the hereditary name of the queens of Meroe, like 'Pharaoh'" (Constable, 191). "The king of Ethiopia was venerated as the child of the sun and regarded as too sacred a personage to discharge the secular functions of royalty; these were performed on his behalf by the queen-mother, who regularly bore the dynastic title Candace" (F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, NICNT, 175).

v. 36 *What prevents me . . .* The rhetorical question means, "I should get baptized, right?" (*NET Bible*, note on 8:36). During Philip's discourse regarding the good news of Jesus Christ, he undoubtedly spoke of a believer's responsibility to be baptized. Whether this topic was discussed before or after his conversion cannot be known. However, the text makes explicitly clear that "barriers have been removed . . . A eunuch, a Gentile, a black was baptized and received into full membership in the people of Jesus Christ" (Polhill, 226).

v. 37 Why is verse 37 not in the ESV translation? "Verse 37 is omitted from the NIV text [cf. ESV, NET, NLT, et al.] of Acts, and for good reasons. It is not found in the early manuscripts of Acts and seems to be a later scribal addition. The added verse, however, has considerable value [which is likely why many present-day translations *include* verse 37 in the Acts 8:26-40 text]. It seems to embody a very early Christian baptismal confession where the one baptizing asked the candidate if he believed in Christ with all his heart, to which the candidate would respond by confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God. This old confession is of real significance to the history of early Christian confessions and would be appropriate to the baptismal ceremony today. To that extent we can be grateful to the pious scribe who ascribed to the eunuch the baptismal confession of his own day" (Polhill, 226).

v. 38 *baptized* "Since the verb employed is *baptizo*, which always carried the idea of total submersion, there is no reason to assume that the eunuch was baptized in any other way than the consistent New Testament pattern of immersion" (Polhill, 226)

v. 39 *rejoicing* This word is used three times in Acts to describe the response of those whose hearts had been moved by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see also: 11:23; 13:48).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

The church expands beyond Samaria as a result of Philip the evangelist and those who faithfully share the good news about Jesus with others like the Ethiopian eunuch.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does the author of this passage want me to know?

2. What does the author of this passage want me to do?

3. What does the author of this passage want me to be?



PARENT CONNECTION

When parents ask me to check to see if their child is ready to be baptized, I often think of this passage from Acts 8. The Ethiopian didn't know everything about the Bible; he knew just enough to trust Jesus and take the next step. So often parents want their kids to have a better grasp of faith, and I can understand that. But don't automatically dismiss it if your child wants to progress in their journey with baptism. Baptism is a beautiful picture of something that has already happened in the heart—a decision to trust Jesus. You can explain it in ways they understand, like comparing it to a symbol, much like a wedding ring represents a promise. Help them see that baptism doesn't make them a Christian; it shows others that they already are. It's a celebration, not a requirement for earning God's love. As parents, your role isn't to rush (or stall) the decision but to gently guide, ask questions, and listen for genuine understanding. When your child begins to grasp what sin is and who Jesus is, and expresses a real desire to follow Him, that's a sign they may be ready. Remind them that there's no perfect age or complete knowledge required—just a sincere heart of faith. Pray with them and ask God to guide this decision. Through this process, you've created a home where spiritual conversations feel natural and safe. When baptism is approached with clarity, patience, and joy, it becomes not just a moment in time, but a milestone that strengthens your child's relationship with God and deepens your connection as a family. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Skim Acts 8:26-40.

1. What did the angel tell Philip to do?
2. What questions did the eunuch ask Philip?
3. What did Philip explain?

What Do You Think?

How did Philip get to Azotus?

What Do You Do?

As a family, take turns sharing your story from faith to baptism. If you've not yet been baptized, pray and ask God for clarity as to when you should take this important step.

CORE COMPETENCY: Single-Mindedness

I share Jesus with others with my words and actions.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 41:1

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.