

Case Studies

This case study can be carried out as a dramatic reading followed by discussion of the questions provided at the end. A narrator, angel, Philip, eunuch, and "Voice of Isaiah" are needed to do this short reading.

A Lone Man on a Desert Road – Acts 8 A Case Study in Conversion

Narrator This is the story of a solitary man from Africa. He appears in the Bible for a moment of time. We know very little of his background, and we hear nothing about him afterward. But he was important to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus sent an angel to act on the man's behalf. It is a lovely picture of how our risen Lord works in the lives of individuals to bring about their conversion.

This is the chain of events that took place: Jesus sent his angel, the angel gave instructions to the evangelist Philip, and Philip became the messenger of salvation to this lone man as he journeyed on the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

Angel Philip, go south quickly, along the desert road that runs down to Gaza.

Narrator So Philip went, and before long he overtook a traveler on the road. The man was an Ethiopian, a eunuch and treasury officer in the court of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He had been at Jerusalem to worship. Now, on his way home, he was sitting in his chariot, reading a scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

Angel Philip, hurry to that chariot and run beside it.

Narrator Philip ran to the chariot and heard the man reading from Isaiah the prophet. He was reading aloud and pondering the prophet's message.

Philip Sir, do you understand what you are reading?

Eunuch How can I, unless someone explains it to me? Come and sit with me.

Narrator The passage of Scripture that the eunuch was reading was this:

Voice of Isaiah "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before the shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
In his humiliation he was deprived of justice,
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth."

Eunuch Please tell me who the prophet is talking about. Is it about himself or someone else?

Narrator Then Philip began at this passage and told the eunuch the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to a pool of water and the eunuch spoke up:

Eunuch Look, here is water. Is there any reason why I cannot be baptized?

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

Eunuch I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Narrator The eunuch ordered his driver to stop the chariot. Then he and Philip went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again, but he went on his way rejoicing in the hope of salvation.

Questions:

- 1 – Starting with Isaiah 53:7-8, what can you say about Jesus?
- 2 – The Ethiopian eunuch was not a persecutor of Jesus like Saul of Tarsus. Nor was he a Jew who shouted for the crucifixion of Christ. In these respects he was more like us, an ordinary person who minded his own business and went about life without committing enormous sins against God. What crisis of conscience, then, do you think the eunuch might have experienced after Philip told him the good news about Jesus?
- 3 – What spiritual qualities can you identify in the eunuch that may have commended him to Jesus as a candidate for eternal life?
- 4 – Do you have any of the spiritual qualities of the eunuch? What does it take for us to cultivate such qualities?
- 5 – How many “coincidences” can you identify in the story of the eunuch, things that just happened to work out right? Were these just coincidences? What do you think?