



Philip and the Ethiopian

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Acts 8:26-38 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 a desert. 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, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the Prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 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.

In His humiliation, His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation?

For His life is taken from the earth."

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

So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Isn't it wonderful of God to send His servant, St. Philip to explain the things that the Ethiopian man didn't understand about Him? We can be assured that God wants us to seek Him and learn more about His character and His will for us. If we want to know Him better and we pray about it, He will send us holy people who will help us, just like He sent Philip to this man!

Do you wonder what happened next in the life of this newly-baptized Ethiopian man? St. Irenaeus wrote about him in his book, *Against the Heresies*, about 180 AD. He tells us that after St. Philip baptized him, he returned to central Ethiopia to preach what he had learned that day. We celebrate his feast on August 27th.

Ethiopian Chariot Race

This is a great game to play when you have a lot of participants. First, have all the participants partner up! One person will be the Ethiopian and the other St. Philip. The Ethiopian will carry a paper with the quote from the Prophet Isaiah from the scripture story above.

1. **Establish your chariot.** It could be anything that two people can climb into and run! It might be a big inner tube, hula hoop, or cardboard box. As time permits, it may be fun to decorate your chariots before you begin the race.
2. **Construct a path for your chariot.** Create a fun obstacle course to run through to baptize the Ethiopian! They rode through the desert, so your course can be indoors or outdoors, with obstacles to cross over if you like, or not, as you desire. You can be as creative as you like! Be sure to establish your course's starting and finish points. You may opt to have a water feature at the end of the race to "baptize" the Ethiopians. This can be a dunk in the pool, a bucket of water over the head, or something as simple as a little sprinkle with a cotton ball.
3. **Let the Race Begin!** Philip begins at the finishing line. At the words, "Go near and overtake this chariot!" he races to the chariot and climbs in with his partner, the Ethiopian, and together they read the quote from Isaiah aloud. When they finish reading the whole thing, they race toward the finish line in their chariots. *Younger participants may just hand over the copy to their partner, or perhaps hand a small cross to him instead of reading from Isaiah.
4. **Once they reach the finish line, the first team to baptize the Ethiopian wins!**