



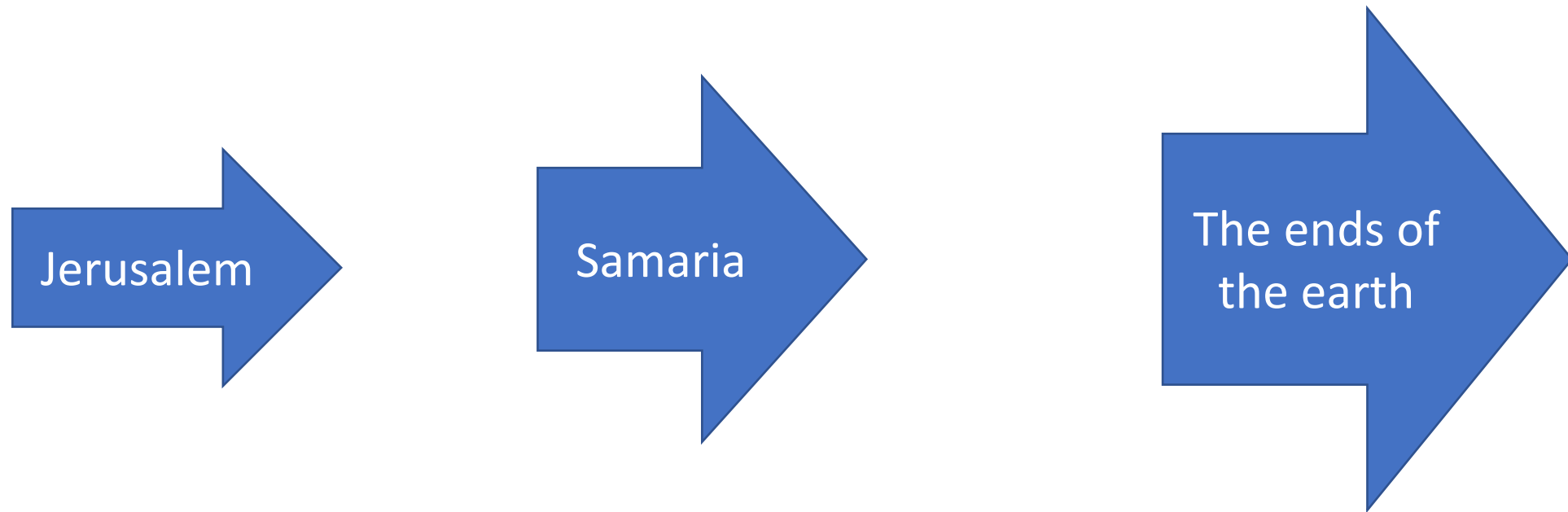
Spread the Message
And
Spot the Pattern

Acts 8:26-40

Cf. Jesus ministry as shown in John's gospel :-

Judea -> the Samaritan woman -> a Gentile ruler in Galilee

Pentecost – Jewish crowd -> Philip – in Samaria ->The Ethiopian Official



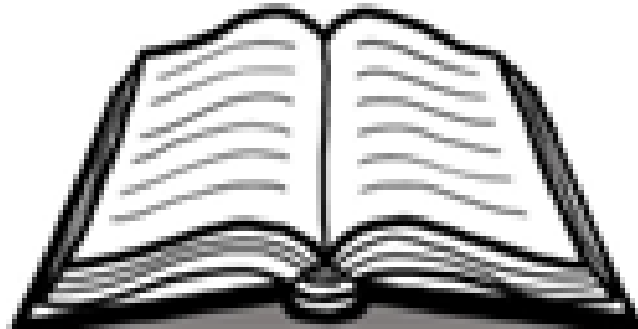
Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The Ethiopian Official

Act 8:26-40 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. 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 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

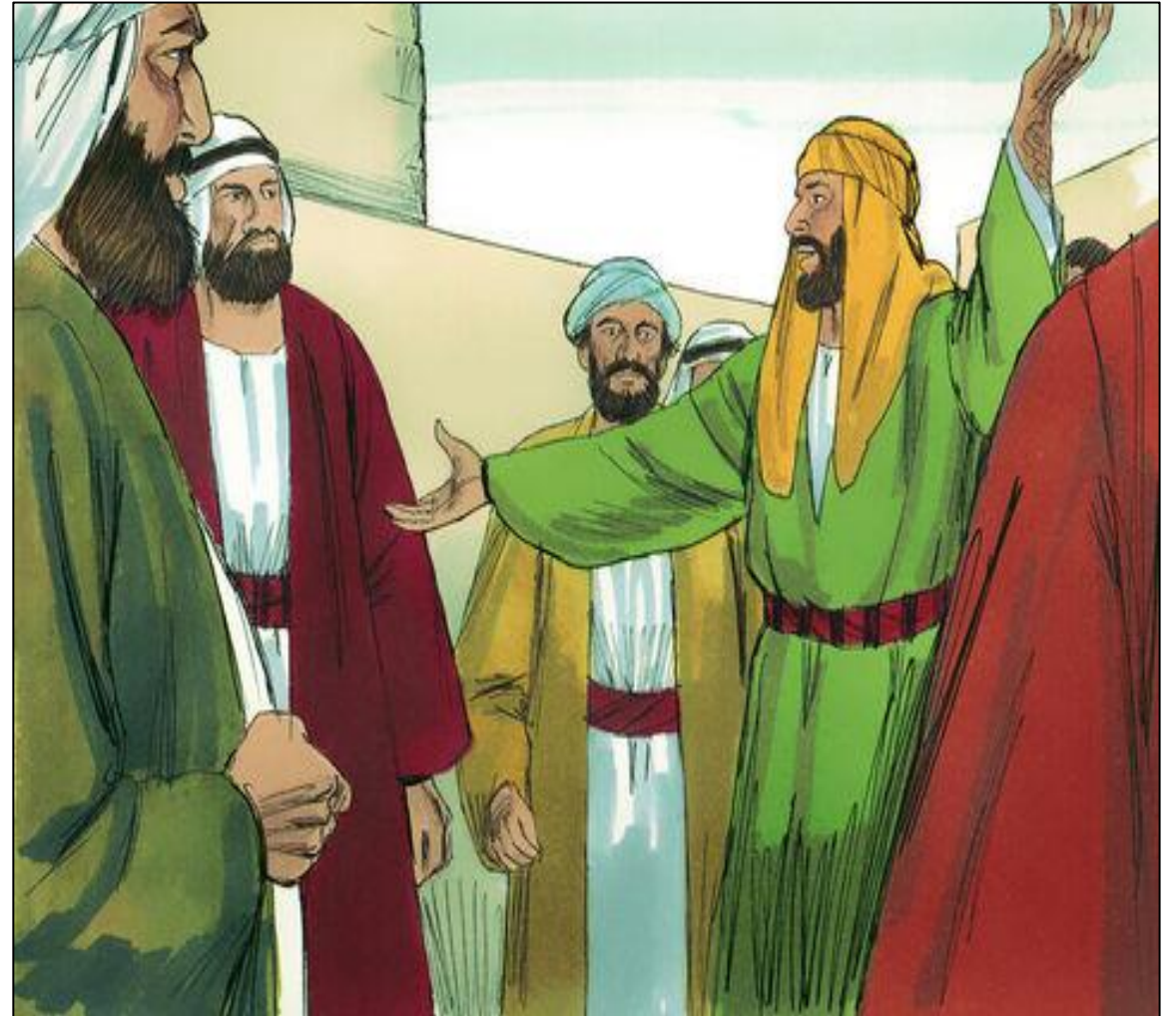
Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 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?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

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. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.



But first ...

Acts 8:5-8 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.



Philip was having great success and opportunities in Samaria

Fresh instructions

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, v26

Something important is coming.

Do you know if you have seen an angel?



Good spiritual hearing – leave the success

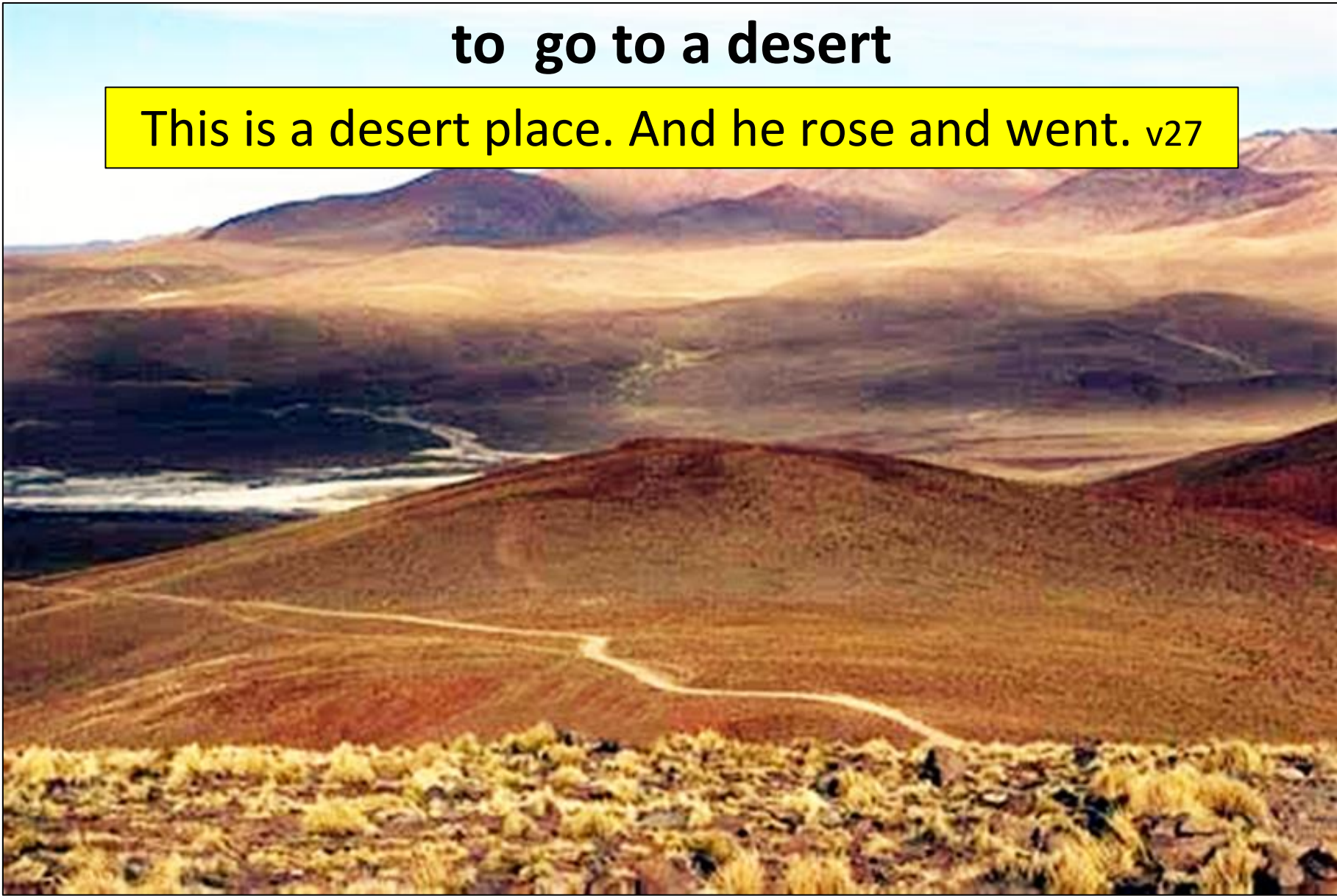
Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” v26

There were 2 possible routes
One by the coast
The other - inland



to go to a desert

This is a desert place. And he rose and went. v27



Obedience! He wasn't told 'why' – he just got up and went!

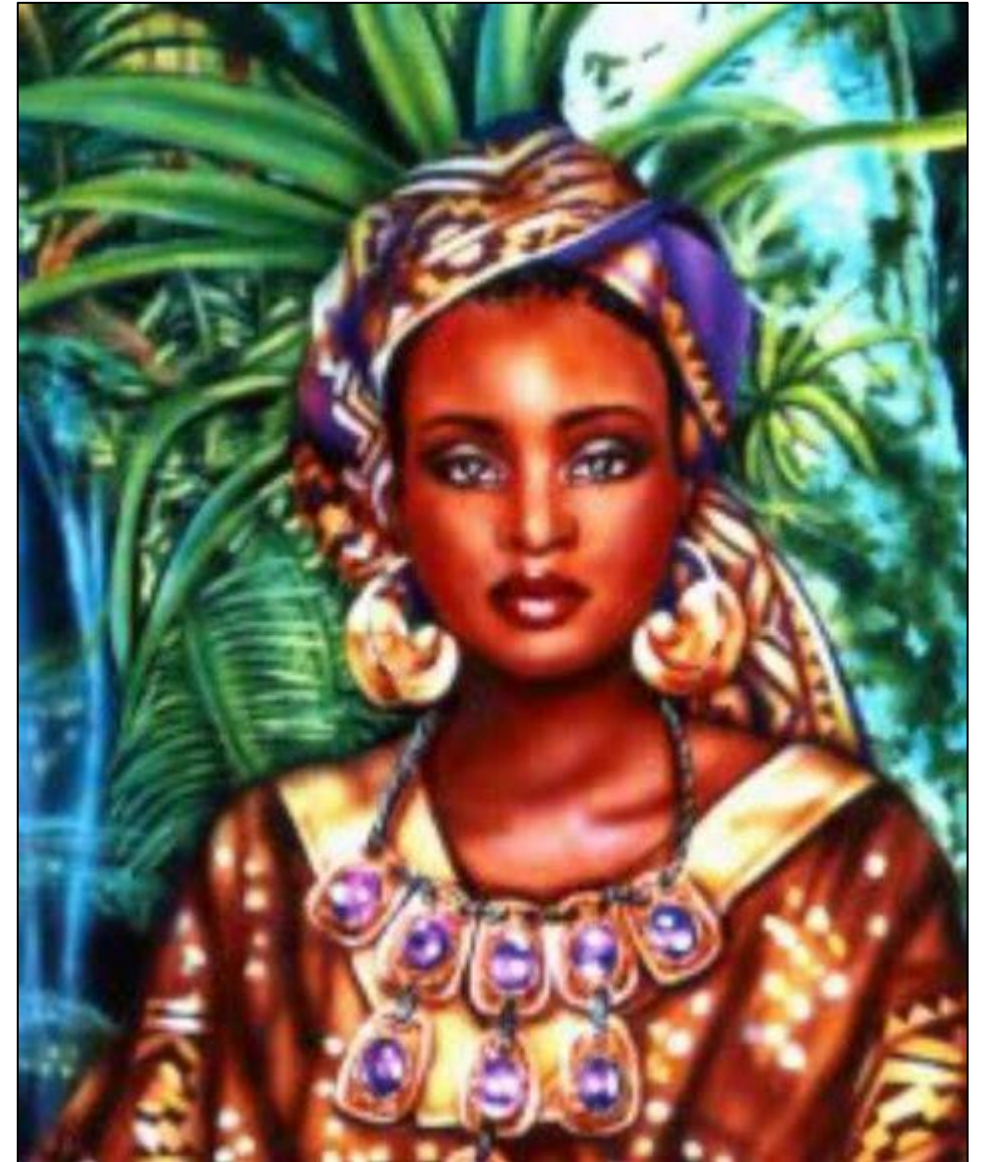
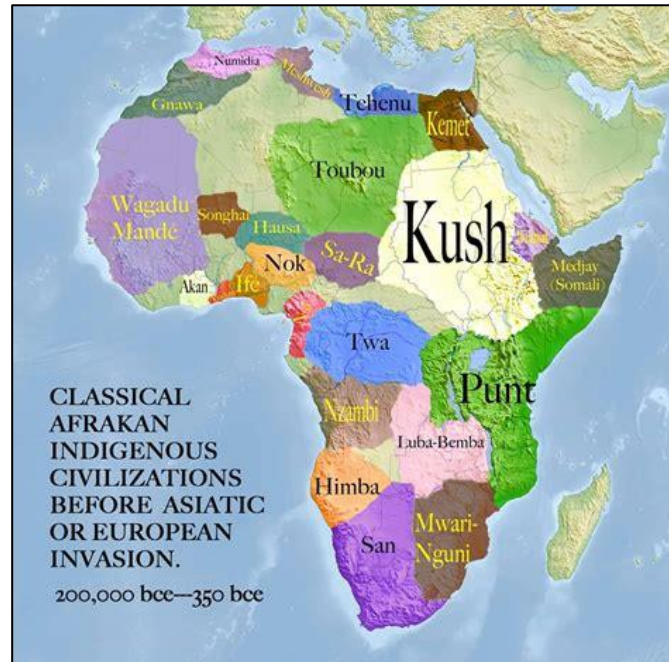
Candace – Queen of Ethiopia

Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, v27

Candace is a title rather than her name. Similar to Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

‘Ethiopia’ covered a wider area than the country does today.

It was the ancient Nubian kingdom of Kush, in today's Sudan.



The Ethiopian Chancellor of the Exchequer

And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. v27

He had come to Jerusalem to worship

- * Eunuch had come to simply mean an official
- * He held a high, responsible position
- * He had come to believe in the God of Israel
- * He was a gentile God-fearer
(How did that happen?)
- * He was a true seeker (he came a long way)

We are not told his name, but God knew it!



He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning,
seated in his chariot, v28



Having been to one of the 3 yearly festivals, he probably came with an entourage. Top officials rarely travel alone!

How many bibles do you have?

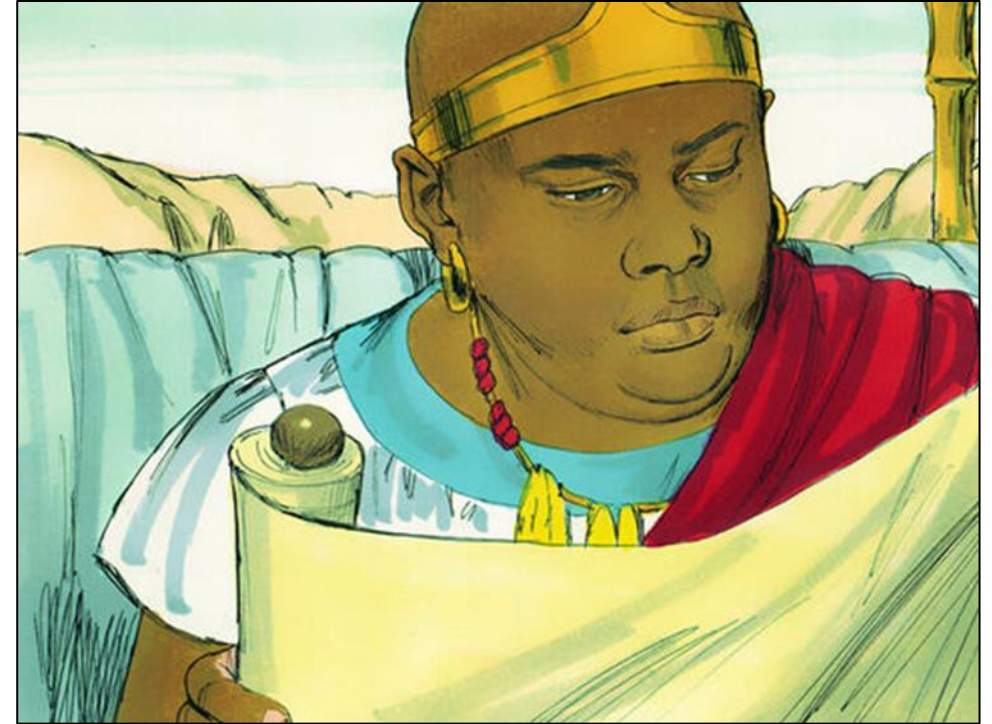
and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. v28

He had his own personal copy.

That was expensive.

For most people who didn't own a bible they learnt scripture by listening to it being read from "Moses' seat", a special platform seat in the synagogue.

He read – out loud - a recommended way to memorise and take in the Scriptures.

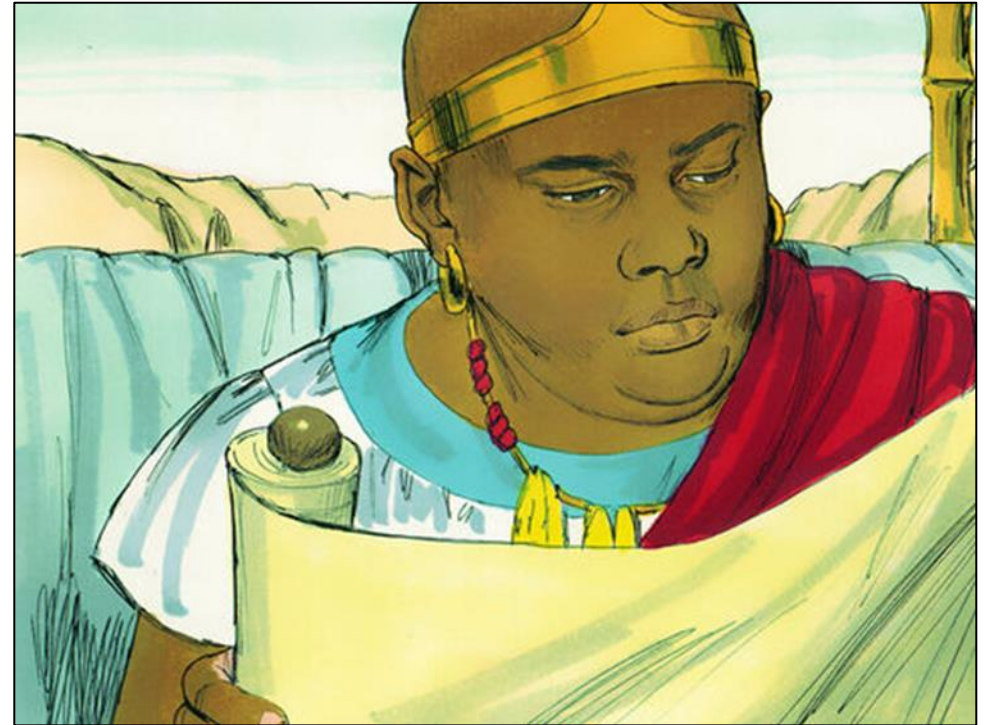


How much of the bible do you read?

A good translation?

and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

The Bible at that time was just the Hebrew bible (Old Testament). It had been translated into Greek. This was the international language at the time. And the Septuagint was the official 'Authorised Version' and is frequently used in NT by the writers when quote OT scripture passages. The New Testament was written with an international outreach in mind.



And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." v29

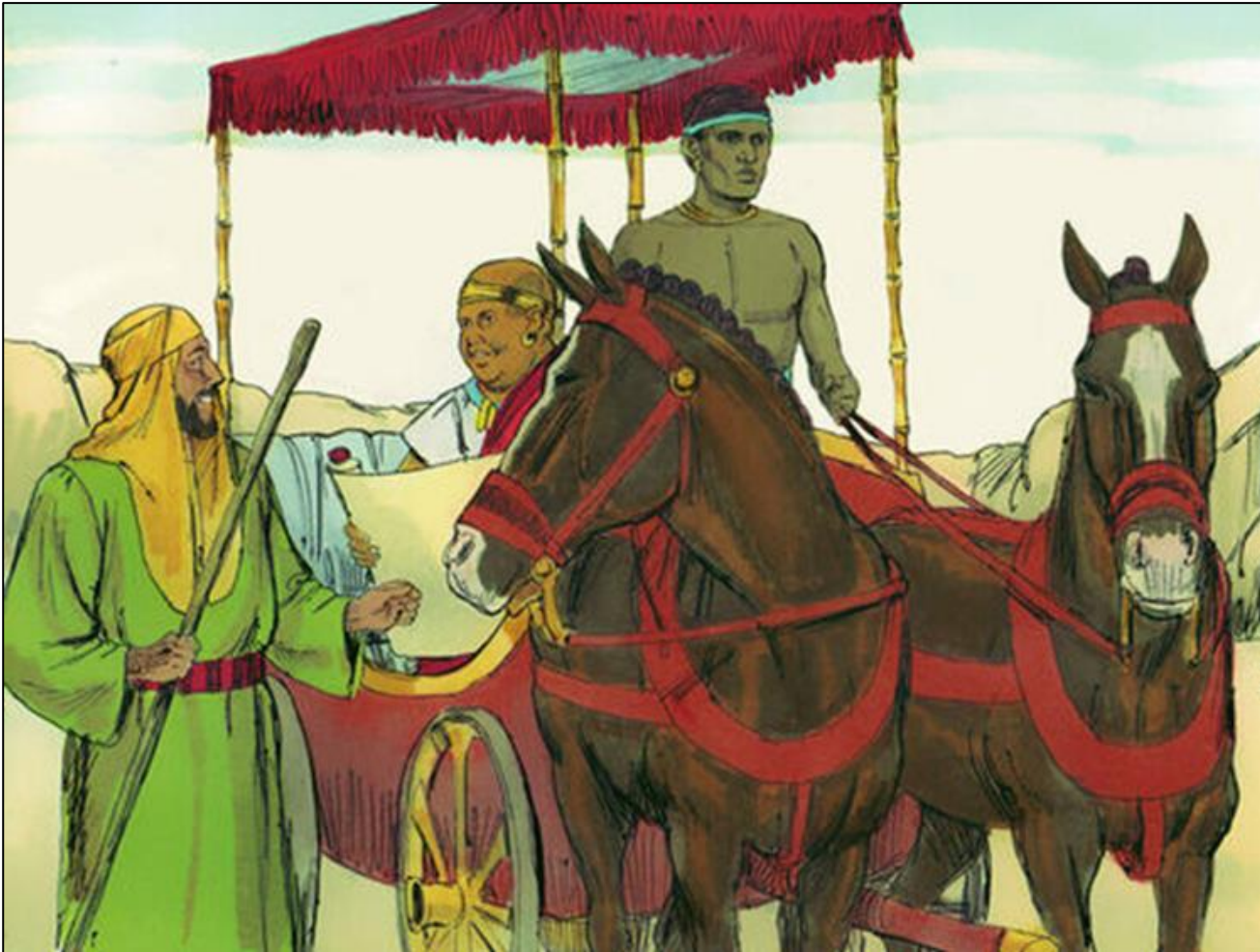


It doesn't tell us how Philip got the message, but he knew what to do.

Joining up with a travelling caravan would be OK.

Just the right time and place.

So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet v30



He was reading **ALOUD**, perhaps also for the benefit of the driver...

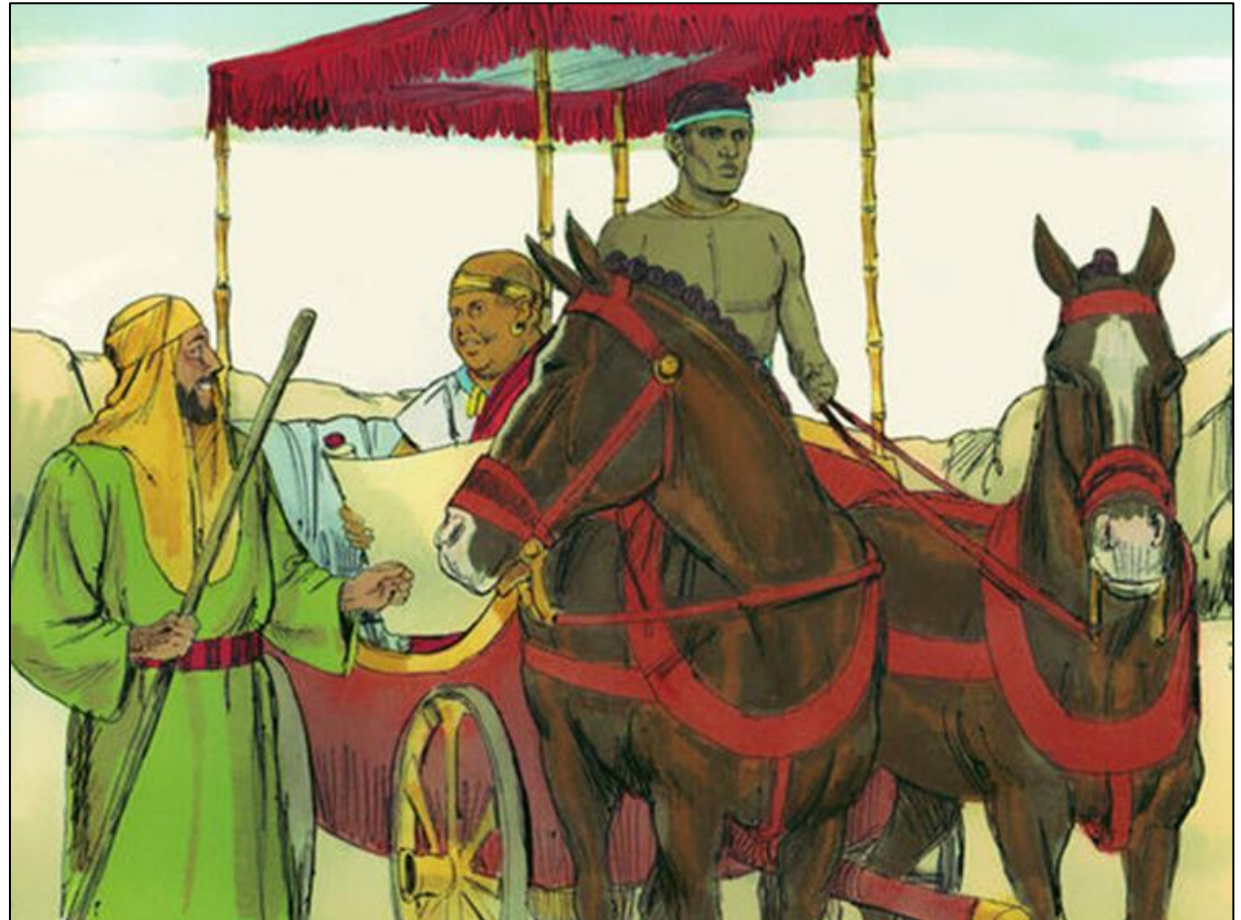
– so Philip could tell what he was reading.

It's not just what you say --- it's the way that you say it...

and *he* asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" v30

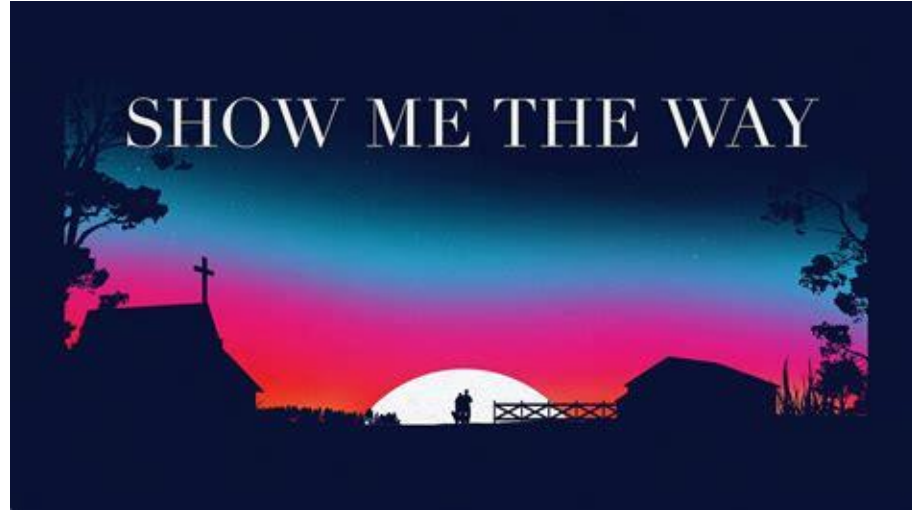
He could have taken offence
at such a remark.

How would you react
if someone said that to you?



A humble, teachable spirit will be able to learn

And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" v31



A friendly man.

And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. v31

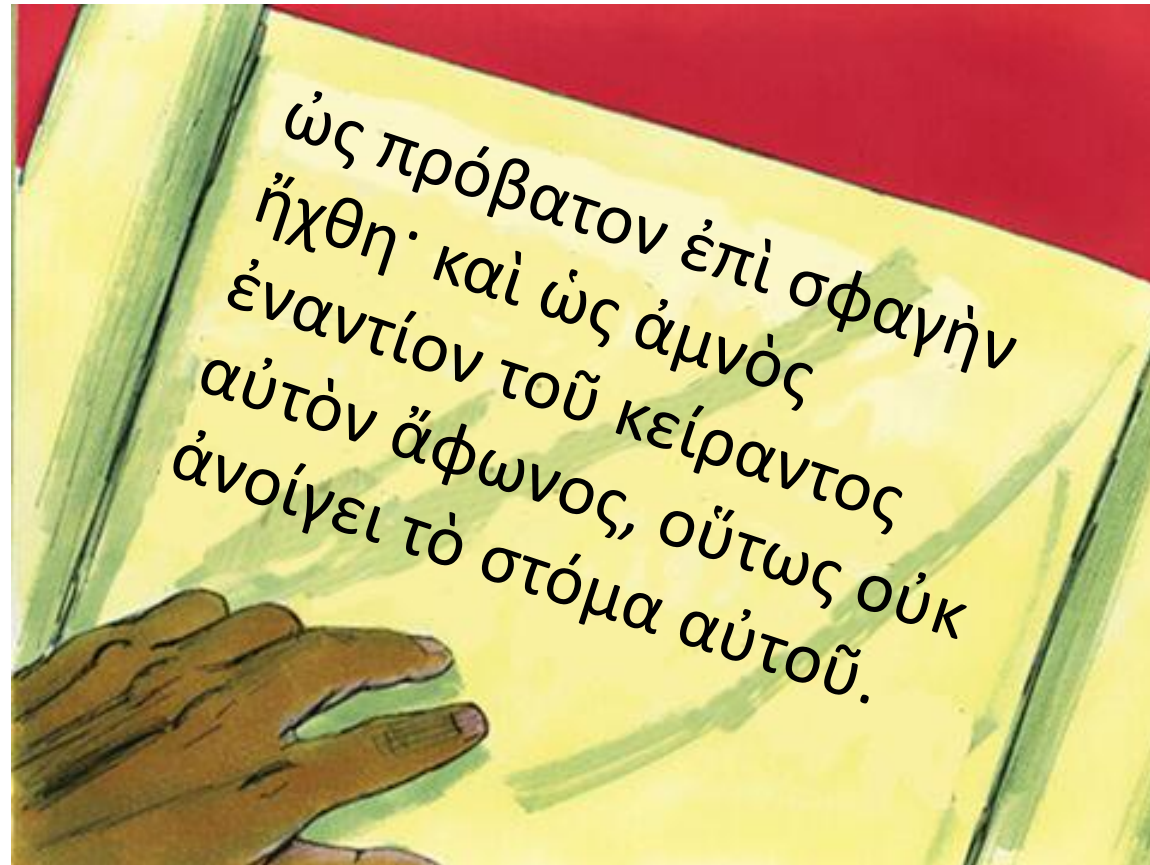
Philip must have given the impression that he could help him.



1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ..

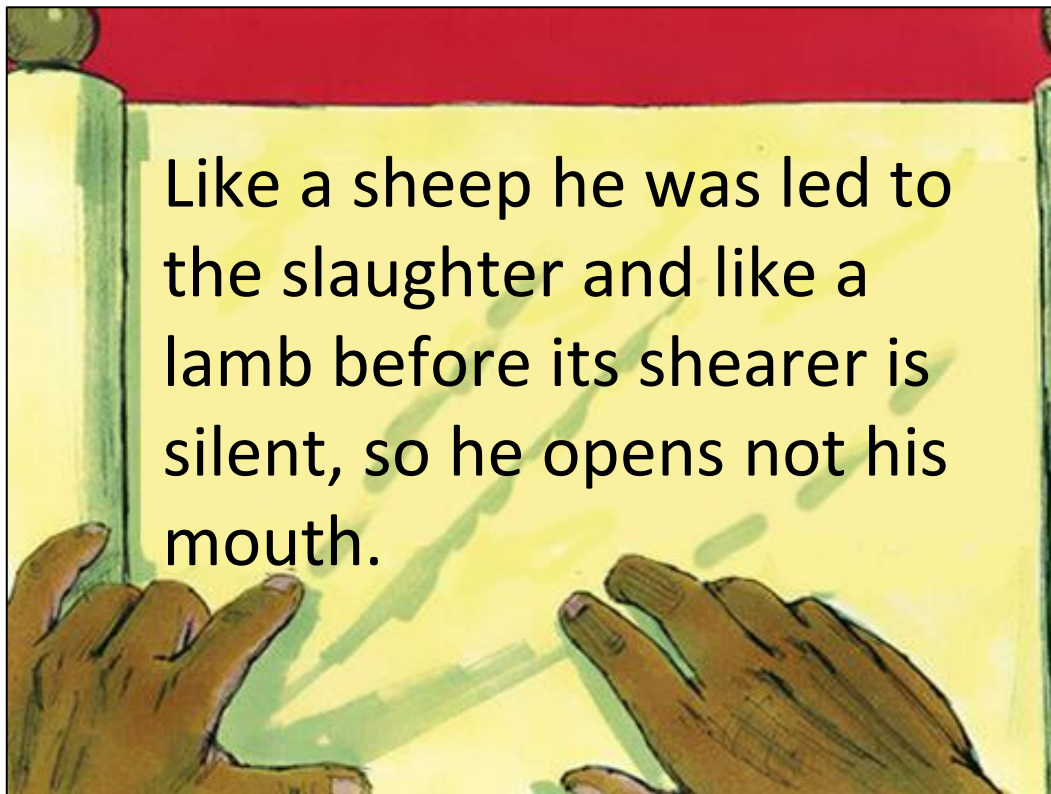
It's not just any old writing...

Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading v32



2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

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. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” v32-33



This is a passage from the Septuagint version of Isaiah chapter 53 verses 7 and 8

It had been written 700 years before then.

Learn by asking questions

And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” v34

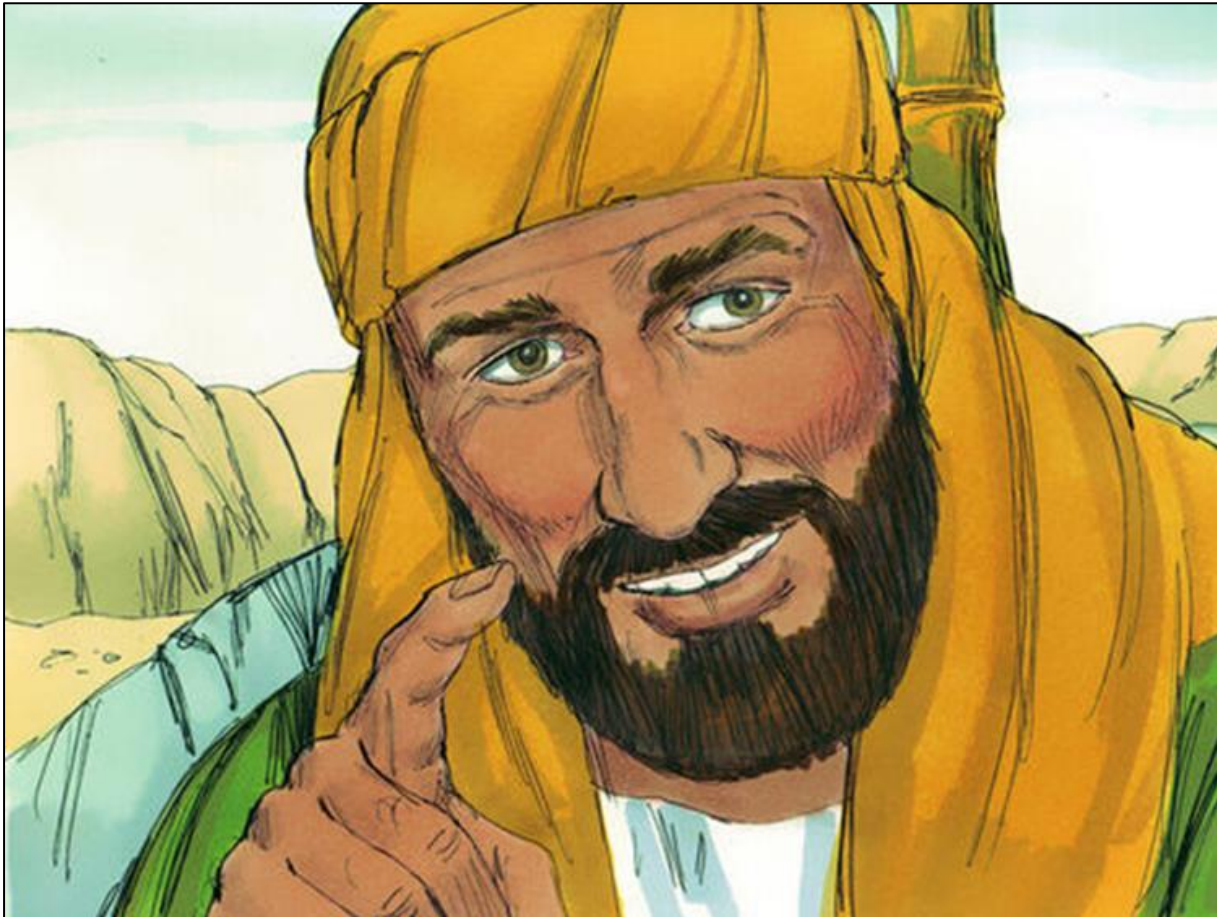


There were various current ideas:- The writer was talking about

- 1, the People of Israel,
- 2, Isaiah, himself
- 3, the Messiah

The New Testament Answer is : - Jesus the Messiah

Then Philip opened his mouth,
and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. v35

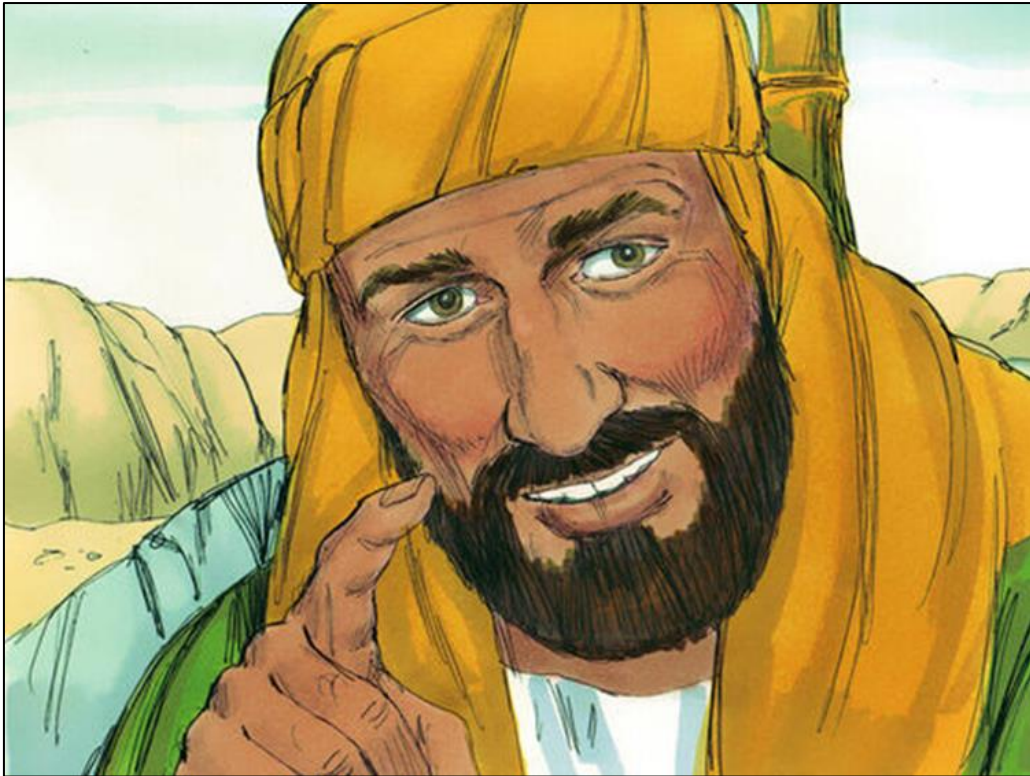


A very good place to start

And there is more ...

And there is more ...

he told him the good news about Jesus. v35



We are not told the rest of the conversation but it must have included :-

- *Jesus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering servant of God.
- *Jesus' death as an atoning sacrifice.
- *His resurrection to be our living Lord.
- *Faith in him and what he has done as the means of forgiveness
- * And believer's baptism as a sign of commitment as Jesus' disciple.

Another 'coincidence'!

And as they were going along the road they came to some water, v36

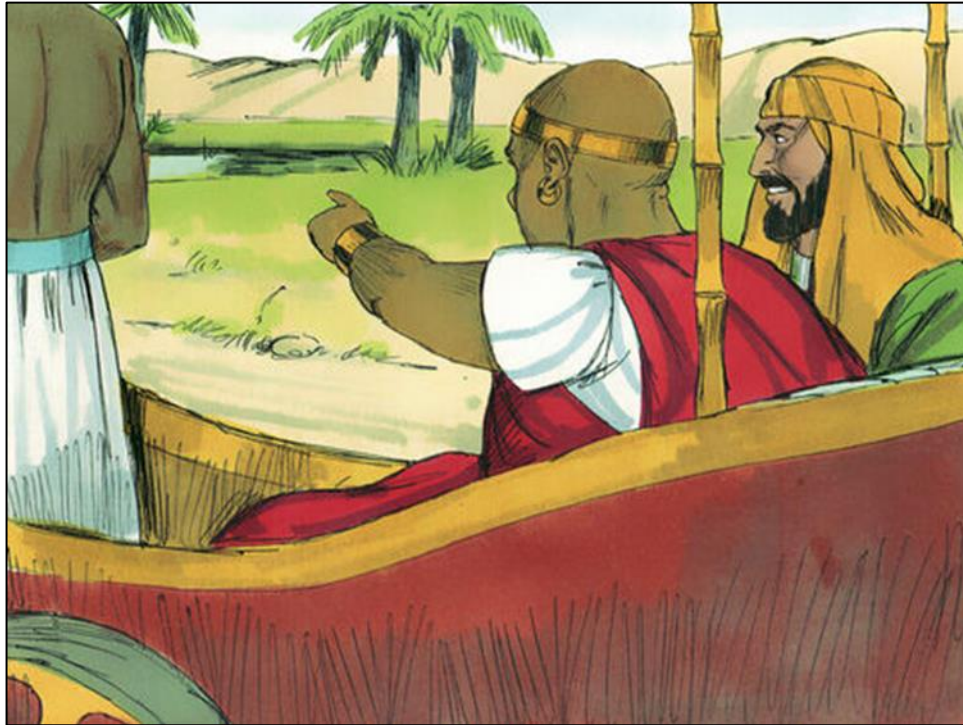
There are natural pools on the desert road.

The area is cross by several river beds eg. The Sorek, which run down to the coastal plain.



A keen disciple

and the eunuch said,
"See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" v36



The answer is 'Nothing'

Some late NT manuscripts have what is considered to be a textual insertion by way of an extended answer.

Acts 8:37 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."

Why baptism ?

And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. v38



It was a public confession of his faith in his Saviour and Lord, Jesus the Messiah.
How many were present? Philip, the driver, plus the cavalcade.
It is called “Believer’s Baptism”.

Where did he go?

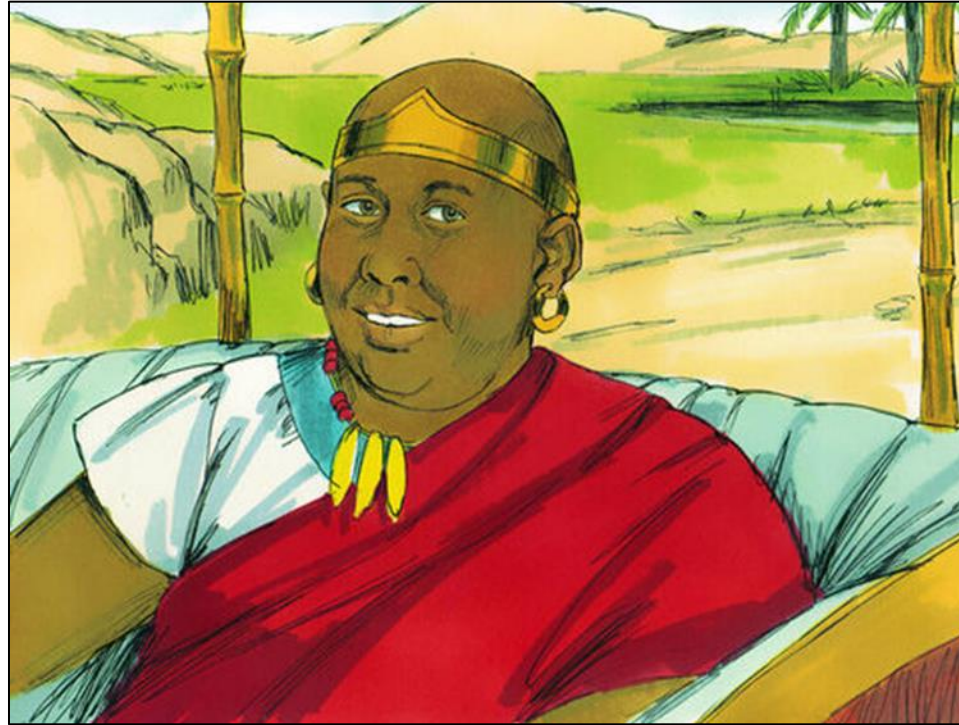
And when they came up out of the water,
the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, v39



It wasn't that he just left, Philip experienced supernatural transport

The Pioneer African Church-planter.

and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. v39



This would also have been confirmation to him that all this was God's doing.
He went on his way (back home) rejoicing
– enjoying the new reality of a personal understanding and salvation

But Philip found himself at Azotus, v40



It was quite a few miles from where he started.

Did he ask someone to tell him where he was?



Spread the message – there are others that the Lord is calling

and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea. v40



He takes up residence in the Roman headquarters in the area.

We see the beginning of a fulfilment of Psalm 68:28-32

68:28 Summon your power, O God, the power, O God, by which you have worked for us.

68:29 Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings shall bear gifts to you.

68:30 Rebuke the beasts that dwell among the reeds, the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples. Trample underfoot those who lust after tribute; scatter the peoples who delight in war.

68:31 Nobles shall come from Egypt; Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God.

68:32 O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, Selah

And finally: Why did the Holy Spirit not give us the name of the Ethiopian official?