



## SoulShare

September 12, 2020 9:00—10:30 am Bible Study Discussion

### Philip the Evangelist

I am Philip, sometimes called Philip the evangelist to distinguish me from Philip the apostle. I was one of eight deacons, selected to deal with the distribution of food. That would have been a great enough honor in that it freed the Apostles to study, pray and teach. But the Holy Spirit gave other gifts. Now before you get jealous, I will remind you that the first deacon, Stephen, got stoned to death by the Sanhedrin for “blasphemy.”

After that event, when we scattered, I went to Samaria, by the grace of God, to preach, heal and free people from demons. By the way, I want to make it clear that what I am talking about is not another name for what you might call mental illness. There were many unclean spirits active especially at the time. The enemy was active because of what the Savior had done. Jesus Christ appeared on earth, died as the ultimate Lamb of God and rose again in victory. Satan and his legions of disobedient spirits failed to stop it but now tried to prevent the spreading of that good news of “The Way”.

When the apostles heard that many Samaritans had believed and were baptized, they sent Peter and John from Jerusalem. The two apostles prayed that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit. As seemed to happen among each new group to join our fellowship, there was a dramatic event resembling what had happened on Pentecost. Here we saw without a doubt that Jesus’ Kingdom included the Samaritans.

Among the converts was a sorcerer named Simon. His conversion had seemed genuine, but the spiritual power shown by Peter and John was a great temptation to him. He offered money for the gift and earned the wrath of Peter who said, “To hell with your money! And you along with it.” Simon repented and begged them to pray for him.

I guess I was to become an itinerant preacher. I walked to Samaria and had a successful ministry. Then I was told by an angel to go south until I met the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. En route I met a high official of the Ethiopian government. He was treasurer to Queen Candace.

I need to mention that he was an eunuch. We Jews had been taught that eunuchs “shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.” Castrating boys destined to be royal officials or harem guards was done in pagan cultures but was forbidden to Israelites. In the present case, I was sent by an angel to bring the gospel to this influential man.

What an opening! Even without the angelic direction, how could I fail to take the opportunity? As I walked alongside the chariot, I heard him reading from 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.” That immediately reminded me that it was Isaiah who foreshadowed the opening of God’s kingdom to eunuchs.

This was a Jewish convert who studied the Scriptures and was asking for the gospel! Have you ever had such an open door? He immediately believed, saw a body of water (maybe the only one for miles around) and asked to be baptized. As we came up out of the water, I was taken by the Spirit of the Lord far away and showed up in Azotus, also known as Ashdod. I did not have time to wonder if I should

call for Peter and John to pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon him. But it was clear that the Kingdom was growing in numbers and diversity: Samaritans and now eunuchs!

My ministry continued, although most of it was not recorded by Dr. Luke in his history. But years later, while I was living in Caesarea, I was visited by Paul and Luke. They were on their way to Jerusalem and I introduced them to my four daughters, who were all prophets.

The church had been persecuted through those years and many were killed. Yet, the Lord had given me a long and fruitful ministry. He also gave me a family, who all loved the Lord. For these blessings I am constantly grateful.

Acts 8, 21:7-8, Deuteronomy 23:1, Isaiah 53, 56:3

*Remember that these monologues are essentially historical fiction, based on the Scripture but filling in plausible subjective details, both emotional responses and motivations. Your first task is to decide if they are reasonable. Read the Scriptures Acts 8, 21:7-8, Deuteronomy 23:1, Isaiah 53, 56:3*

*Deacons had powerful evangelistic ministries. The official title of an individual may not indicate the real calling or ministry. Are we often distracted by titles in evaluating others or measuring ourselves?*

*Can ministry in the center of God's will still be dangerous?*

*How should we respond to risk? How does that response affect others who see us?*

*Can we intellectually believe in demons and functionally forget about them?*

*What is the proper Scriptural response to the knowledge that there are spiritual adversaries? Ephesians 6*

*Is it reasonable that demonic activity was increased during the earthly life of Jesus?*

*Might demonic activity be increased during the present day? Why?*

*What are variations of belief about demons among modern Americans?*

*Repeats of the Pentecost experience seems to occur several times in Acts when a new group came into the church. Why?*

*Does the Scripture support the notion that speaking in tongues is essential for the Christian?  
1 Corinthians 12*

*Eunuchs were forbidden in the Temple. Many pagan temples had shrine prostitutes, female and castrated male and this may have been to make a clear separation from paganism. Does it mean they cannot be saved?*

*Does God have a place in His Kingdom for the sexually abnormal? See Isaiah 56:3, 1 Corinthians 6:9 -11.*

*Does God love the transsexuals and gays?*

*Are we commonly put off by people who are different, including the retarded, disabled, disfigured? What should we do about it?*

*Jesus is described as unattractive. Is there a reason why God did not make Him a "Leading Man-type"?*

*Phillip got a family and long life, Steven a short life and violent death. Can we be sure of our future?*

*Phillips daughters were prophets. Might women be prophets today?*