

DAY 5-TRUTH: THE BIBLE IS TRUE

Philip Told the Good News (Isaiah 53:7-8; Acts 8:26-40)

Our VBS Bible studies have connected Old Testament prophecies to their fulfillment in the New Testament. We sometimes hear people talk as if the Old Testament is irrelevant and unimportant. However, God gave us the entire Bible to help us see the entire message of the gospel. Today's Old Testament connection is right in the middle of a Bible story found in Acts. The Ethiopian was reading from the scroll of Isaiah as he traveled home in his chariot. We know this portion as Isaiah 53:7-8.

The Ethiopian was reading aloud as he returned from worshiping in Jerusalem. Reading aloud was common, especially if the writing was not in a person's native language. The scroll was mostly likely written in Greek. As the chariot rumbled along the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, the Ethiopian was apparently focused on what he was reading and struggling to understand.

Meanwhile, Philip (one of the original men chosen as deacons; Acts 6:5) had been preaching in Samaria with great success. Many were hearing his message and responding to the gospel. Things were going great! It is not uncommon for God to ask His followers to stop what they are doing and go somewhere else just when things seem to be going really well.

Based on the Scripture, it appears Philip did not question or hesitate. He simply "got up and went." When Philip saw the chariot, the Spirit told him to go and join the chariot. Philip ran to catch up and heard the Ethiopian reading. "Do you understand what you're reading?" Philip asked. The Ethiopian expressed his desire to have someone explain it to him and invited Philip to join him in the chariot.

The passage the Ethiopian was reading is from a section of Isaiah often called the "Suffering Servant" passage, which prophesied about the coming Savior. Philip had no problem beginning with that passage and proceeding to explain the good news about Jesus to the Ethiopian.

While they were traveling, they came to some water and the Ethiopian asked to be baptized. He understood the gospel and wanted to follow Jesus. The Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing and Philip was whisked away by the Spirit to Azotus, where Philip continued to preach the gospel.

Today's Bible study helps us know that we can use God's Word to tell others about Jesus. Philip was able to begin with the Ethiopian's question and show him Jesus. We, too, can follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit. We can begin at any point with someone's question and share with him or her about Jesus. We are not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).

Facts and Artifacts

In addition to connecting Old Testament prophecies with New Testament fulfillments, this week of VBS links each day to real archaeological finds that further emphasize the reality of what we read in the Bible.

Today's artifact: The Great Isaiah Scroll (Dead Sea Scrolls)

Isn't it amazing that today's artifact is the same portion of Scripture the Ethiopian was reading? In fact, "The Great Isaiah Scroll" is one of the original seven Dead Sea Scrolls found. It is the largest and best preserved biblical scroll and dates to about 125 BC.

Think About It

Based on your study this week, what truths are more real to you than ever before?