



Philip Shares the Gospel with the Ethiopian

Acts 8:26–40



LESSON GOAL

The child will rejoice that the sovereign God has allowed them to hear His Word.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- The Lord is in control of all that happens.
- Philip told the Ethiopian eunuch the gospel.
- The Ethiopian eunuch went away rejoicing because he was saved.

KEY VERSE

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.” — Acts 8:35

APPLICATION

- Share the gospel like Philip (2 Tim. 4:5).
- When you have repented and become saved, be eager to be baptized.
- Trust that every event has been decreed by God.

NEXT WEEK

Saul Is Converted on the Damascus Road
Acts 9:1–31

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

4

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are...

- _____
- _____
- _____

**Materials
Needed:**

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point them to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

In Acts 8:1–25, Luke records how the persecution of the church led Philip to preach the Gospel in Judea and Samaria. The Samaritans not only believed in Jesus but also received the Holy Spirit, showing that God had given them full status alongside the Jews in His rapidly growing church. The rest of Acts 8 continues to describe God’s remarkable expansion of His kingdom, this time not to a whole people group but to one individual on a journey home. The short episode reveals how God unveils His sovereign plan and uses His Scripture to bring one man to salvation.

God’s Sovereignty in Salvation (Acts 8:26–30)

In Romans 10:14, Paul asks, “How shall they hear without a preacher?” Because God has chosen to use people to proclaim the Gospel, God sent an angel to Philip with directions about where to go after his ministry in the ancient capital of Samaria (Acts 8:26). God’s directions must have seemed strange to Philip. Instead of directing Philip to a particular place, God sent Philip to travel along a desert road which led from Jerusalem to the city of Gaza. The text doesn’t reveal whether God told Philip anything else about his peculiar mission. Philip faithfully obeyed and “arose and went” (8:27).

God had not only sent a preacher along the desert road but also someone who needed to hear the Gospel. A eunuch from the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia (called Cush in the Old Testament and located in modern day Sudan) was returning home after going to Jerusalem to worship. The man was an important official who had charge of the treasury of the Candace, a title (like Caesar or Pharaoh) for the queen of the Ethiopians. Because the man was a eunuch, he was not allowed to proselytize to Judaism (Deuteronomy 23:1) and would never be permitted to enter the temple. The man likely considered himself a worshiper of the God of Israel.

When the Ethiopian approached in his chariot, the Spirit of God told Philip, “Go near and overtake the chariot” (8:29). (The chariot would be large enough for both the eunuch’s driver and his servants). Eager to obey, Philip ran to the chariot. As Philip approached the chariot, he must have been shocked to hear the prophet Isaiah being read by the Ethiopian! The sovereign God not only sent both Philip and Ethiopian along the same desert road, but decreed that the Ethiopian would be reading from His Word just as Philip approached. Philip did not need to be prompted by God again but asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading (8:30). The eunuch naturally responded, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” If Jesus’ disciples on the road to Emmaus needed to have the Scriptures explained to them (Luke 24:2), it was only natural for the man from Ethiopia to need help too.

God's Scripture in Salvation (Acts 8:31–40)

After the eunuch invited Philip to sit and read with him, Philip received another amazing testimony to God's sovereign design for this encounter. The Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53:7-8, a prophecy which describes the suffering and humiliation of the Messiah. The prophecy that the Messiah would not open His mouth, "as a lamb before its shearers is silent," was fulfilled during Jesus' trial, recorded in Matthew 26:62-63 and 27:12-14. The prophecy also predicts the murder of Jesus. Philip's jaw must have dropped as he listened to the eunuch read the prophecy about Jesus. God had planned the perfect opportunity for him to preach Christ.

When the Ethiopian asked Philip who Isaiah was talking about, "himself or some other man" (Acts 8:34), Philip "opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him" (v.35). Philip was faithful to make the most of the opportunity God had given Him and explained what God had revealed about His Son Jesus. Just as the apostle had done and just as Stephen had done, Philip used Scripture to reveal the necessity of the death, resurrection and exaltation of God's Messiah.

God worked through His Spirit, His Word, and His preacher to bring the eunuch to saving faith. When in God's sovereignty, the chariot passed by water, the eunuch could not wait to be baptized. He asked Philip, "What hinders me from being baptized?" (8:36). When a Gentile wanted to proselytize and become a Jew, they would undergo a ritual baptism, but because of his physical blemish this Ethiopian would never have been allowed to become a Jew. Although he had been excluded from becoming a Jew, nothing excluded him from being baptized upon the basis of his faith in Jesus. (The most reliable manuscripts do not have Acts 8:37, although something like the eunuch's confession may have occurred.) Commanding the chariot stop at the water, the eunuch eagerly demonstrated his faith in Christ and was baptized (8:38).

God's sovereign work through His Scripture had been accomplished. After coming out of the water, the Lord miraculously transported Philip away from the eunuch. Philip was found next in Azotus, a city located about twenty miles north of Gaza. Philip continued preaching the Gospel "in all the cities till he came to Caesarea" (8:40). (The next time Philip is mentioned is in Acts 21:8 where he is appropriately called "the evangelist," the only person in Scripture to bear that title). After Philip disappeared, the eunuch "saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39). No more is known of the Ethiopian treasurer.

Conclusion

In a marvelous display of compassion on one soul, God decreed the sending of His preacher, the reading of His Scripture, and the preaching of His Son so that one eunuch could return to Ethiopia rejoicing in his Savior! Although God no longer sends angels to direct men nor transports his servants to other locations, He is still sovereign and still saves through the Scripture. What incredible privilege and responsibility God has given both to the hearer and the preacher of His Word!

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

What is persecution?

Persecution is when people are hurt because of who they are or what they believe.

What happened when the early church was persecuted?

The gospel spread to other places.

What did the man named Simon do?

Simon was what is called a sorcerer or a magician who astonished people with what he did.

What did Simon think when he saw the apostles truly doing miracles?

He was jealous of the apostles and wanted that power for himself.

What did Peter tell Simon?

He told Simon that he could not buy these gifts with money and that he must repent. Simon was not willing to submit himself to God.

Who came to the people of Samaria after they were saved?

The Holy Spirit came to the believers in Samaria after they were saved. This showed that God's gospel was truly spreading to the ends of the earth.



Difficult Concepts

Sovereignty: Today's lesson is an excellent example that God is Sovereign. To be sovereign means to be in control of all things. God is continually working to advance His kingdom and bring glory to Himself. One way He does this is by even leading others to salvation in His Son Jesus Christ.

Baptism: Those that are to be baptized are only those individuals who are genuine followers of Christ. Baptism is not necessary for salvation; it is only the public demonstration of one's faith in Christ. It is a symbol of beginning the Christian life. Because of their profession of faith in Christ, they desire to identify themselves with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. The reason that Christians should participate in baptism is that both Christ and the apostles (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38) commanded them to. To not be baptized after believing in Jesus Christ is a question of obedience before both God and Christ.

Prophecy: The passage of Isaiah 53:7–8 was a prophecy of the Messiah that was to come. By prophecy we mean that God had revealed to Isaiah that one would come and offer salvation to His people. This one to come would be the Messiah. Isaiah then wrote a book that contained all that God had told him and he delivered it to the nation of Israel. In this specific passage, Isaiah had even recorded that



the Messiah would die at the hands of men. God had chosen to give man a glimpse of what was to come hundreds of years later in the coming of His Son Jesus Christ. For the Ethiopian to have been reading this very passage provided Philip with a wonderful opportunity to share with him the good news of Christ Jesus.

Chariot Races

Play this game with the students like wheel barrel races. Explain that one student must walk on their hands and the other must hold them by their feet. Give the students a starting and finishing line.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

The persecution of the church led Philip to preach the Gospel in Judea and Samaria. The Samaritans not only believed in Jesus but also received the Holy Spirit, showing that God had given them equal place with the Jews in the quickly growing church. This was an example of how God worked through Philip to save a whole group of people. God also worked through Philip to save people one by one.

God sent an angel to Philip to give him another job. He told Philip to go travel on the desert road which led from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip faithfully obeyed and “arose and went” (8:27). God had sovereignly placed a man there who was needed someone like Philip to help him. While traveling along the road, just as God had asked him to do, Philip came across this man. He was from the country of Ethiopia, and he was an important helper of the Queen of Ethiopia. He had been in Jerusalem to worship God, because He believed in the God of Israel. When Philip saw him, the Spirit of God told Philip, “Go near and overtake the chariot” (8:29). When Philip got near to the chariot, he heard the man reading from the Scriptures, from the book of the prophet Isaiah. He called out to the man and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” (8:30)

The Ethiopian answered, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” (8:31) Then he asked Philip to sit with him in his chariot. The passage that the man was reading was a prophecy that describes the suffering and humiliation of the Messiah, but he did not know who the passage was talking about. So he asked Philip, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?” (8:34) The man thought that maybe the prophet was talking about his own suffering, but he did not know for sure.

Philip must have been very excited to have such an opportunity. He told the man all about Jesus, that Jesus was the Messiah, and that the passage was referring to

the suffering and humiliation of Jesus. He explained the good news of Jesus's death and resurrection and the salvation offered through Him.

God worked through His Spirit, the Scriptures, and Philip to bring this man to saving faith. Soon after, the chariot passed by water, and the man wanted to be baptized right then. He eagerly showed his faith in Christ and Philip baptized him.

God had one more miracle for this day. As soon as the man was baptized, Philip disappeared from the road and reappeared in the city of Azotus, where he continued to preach the Gospel.

God not only has compassion on all people, but He has compassion on individual souls, like the man from Ethiopia. He sent His preacher Philip there to bring him the good news of Jesus Christ. Although God no longer sends angels to direct men nor makes people disappear and reappear, He is still sovereign and uses His Word, the Bible, to bring us to good news of Jesus Christ.



Lesson Questions

Where did the Lord send Philip?

The Lord sent Philip to go down a road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza.

What did Philip do?

He arose and went.

Who did Philip see on the road?

Philip saw an Ethiopian eunuch who took care of the money of a queen.

What was the Ethiopian reading?

He was reading a scroll from the prophet Isaiah.

What did Philip do when he heard what was being read?

He caught up to the chariot and asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading.

Did the Ethiopian understand what he was reading?

No, Philip explained what it meant and shared God's good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

What did the Ethiopian want to do once he believed?

He wanted to be baptized right away.

What happened to Philip after he baptized the Ethiopian?

Philip disappeared and was in Azotus.

What did the Ethiopian do?

He went away rejoicing. He was praising God for salvation.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Act It Out

Use today's stand alone pictures to make props for today's lesson. Create an overhead of the sheet and project against butcher paper or cardboard. Outline the picture onto the paper and cut it out or decorate it on the wall. Use these enlarged images to make the lesson come alive. Act out today's lesson using these props.

Variation: Create large stand alones and tape them to rulers to create a large puppet set.



Visual Aids

During the teaching time various items may be used to illustrate parts of the lesson. Some of these objects are: chariot, scroll, money bag, and water.



God Is Sovereign Checklist

One of the amazing realities revealed in today's lesson is that God is Sovereign. This is seen in the salvation of the Ethiopian eunuch. In explaining God's sovereignty, point out all that God had planned to occur in order for the Ethiopian to come to faith in His Son, Jesus. To do this, make a large checklist on posterboard in front of the class. This check list should contain all the various events that God will orchestrate in today's lesson (i.e., Philip meeting the Ethiopian, the Ethiopian reading an Isaiah passage regarding the Messiah, the chariot passing water in the middle of the desert etc.,). With this checklist sitting in front of the class, explain to the students that every one of these events God had planned to take place in today's lesson. The teacher will then be able to use this checklist while teaching, checking each of the events as they occur in the lesson. At the end of the lesson, all the events on the list will have been checked off, and God's sovereignty will be clearly seen.



Signpost Prop

Make a signpost for your class. This week, include signs (pointing opposite directions) for Jerusalem and Gaza, with an extra sign for Azotus, 20 miles north of Gaza. (Next week you can add Damascus; the week after, Caesarea and Joppa.)

Praise and Worship

Open Our Eyes

As the Deer

Change My Heart, O God

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



"Tracing Scroll"

Materials: copies of "Tracing Scroll" craft page, scissors, crayons, pencils

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft page and have him or her cut out the verse and then trace over the letters with a crayon. Then help him or her tear the edges of the paper so that it the paper looks worn. Crumple the paper into a ball and then straighten it out again. Use pencils to roll the ends, making the paper look like a scroll.



Philip and the Ethiopian Stand Alone Scenes

Materials: copies of the stand-alone images, construction paper, crayons, glue, background scenes

Directions: Have students either recreate the scene of Philip sharing the Gospel with the Ethiopian eunuch or the scene of Philip baptizing the Eunuch. Cut a slit in the waves to insert Philip and the Ethiopian.



Gaza Board Game

Materials: "On the Road to Gaza" craft pages, scissors, glue, decorations of your choice

Directions: Give each child a board game to decorate and a Philip and Ethiopian playing piece. Fold the playing pieces on the dotted line and glue at the top to make them stand. Students can roll a die to see how many spaces they should move.

Coloring Pages

Give each child a copy of the coloring sheet at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him." —Acts 8:35

Tracing Scroll

Then Philip

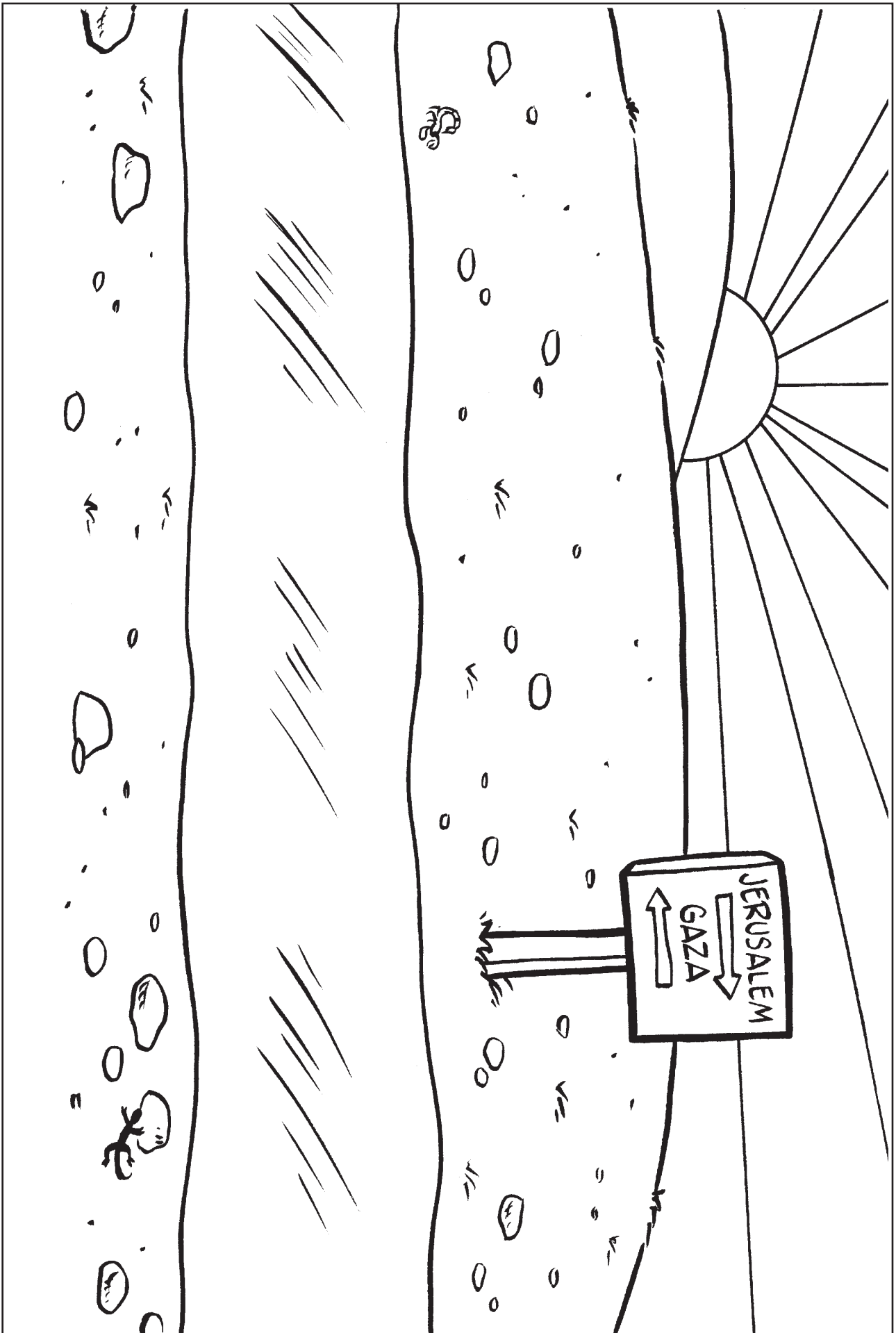
opened his mouth, and
beginning at this Scripture,
preached Jesus to him.

— Acts 8:35

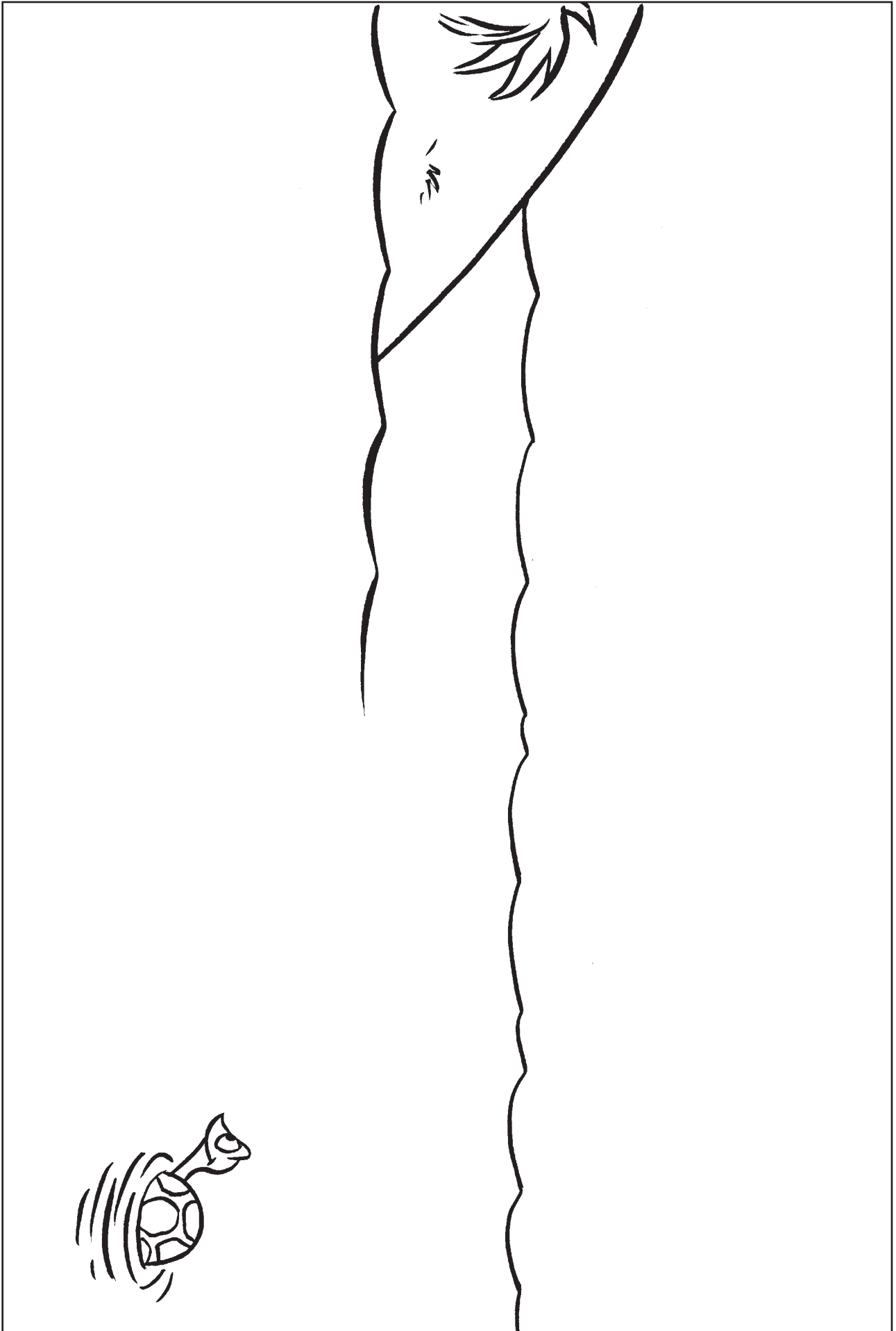
Stand-alones



Road to Gaza



Baptism Scene



START	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Angel talks to Philip.			Philip leaves for Gaza. Move ahead one space.			

13	12	11	10	9	8
		Ethiopian reads from Isaiah.			


15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
				Ethiopian reads from Isaiah.				
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Philip runs to the chariot. Move ahead one space.		Ethiopian asks Philip to teach him.						

On the Road to Gaza


God planned many events that happened to Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26–40. Move the Ethiopian and Philip along the path to review these events.

Ethiopian rejoices! Philip sent to Azotus.	30	29	28	27	26	25	24
END				Philip baptizes the Ethiopian.		Found water by the road. Move ahead two spaces.	

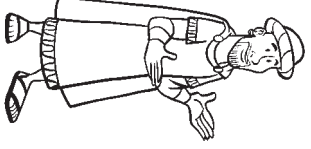
On the Road to Gaza Game Pieces



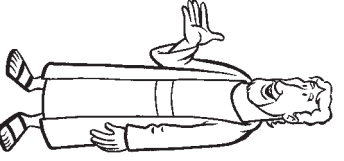
Ethiopian



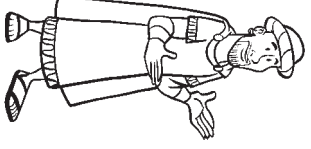
Philip



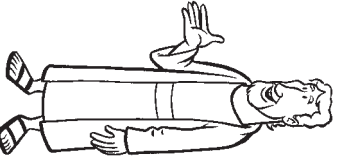
Ethiopian



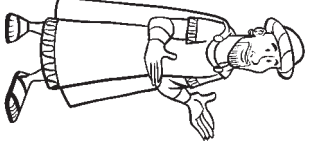
Philip



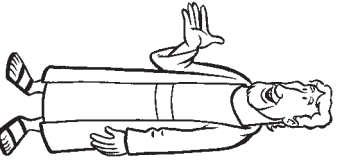
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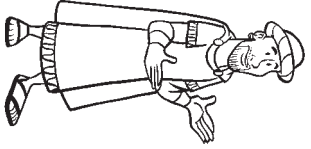
Philip



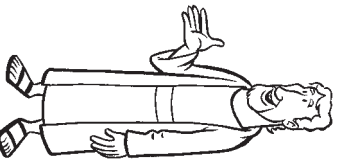
Ethiopian




Philip




Ethiopian



Philip



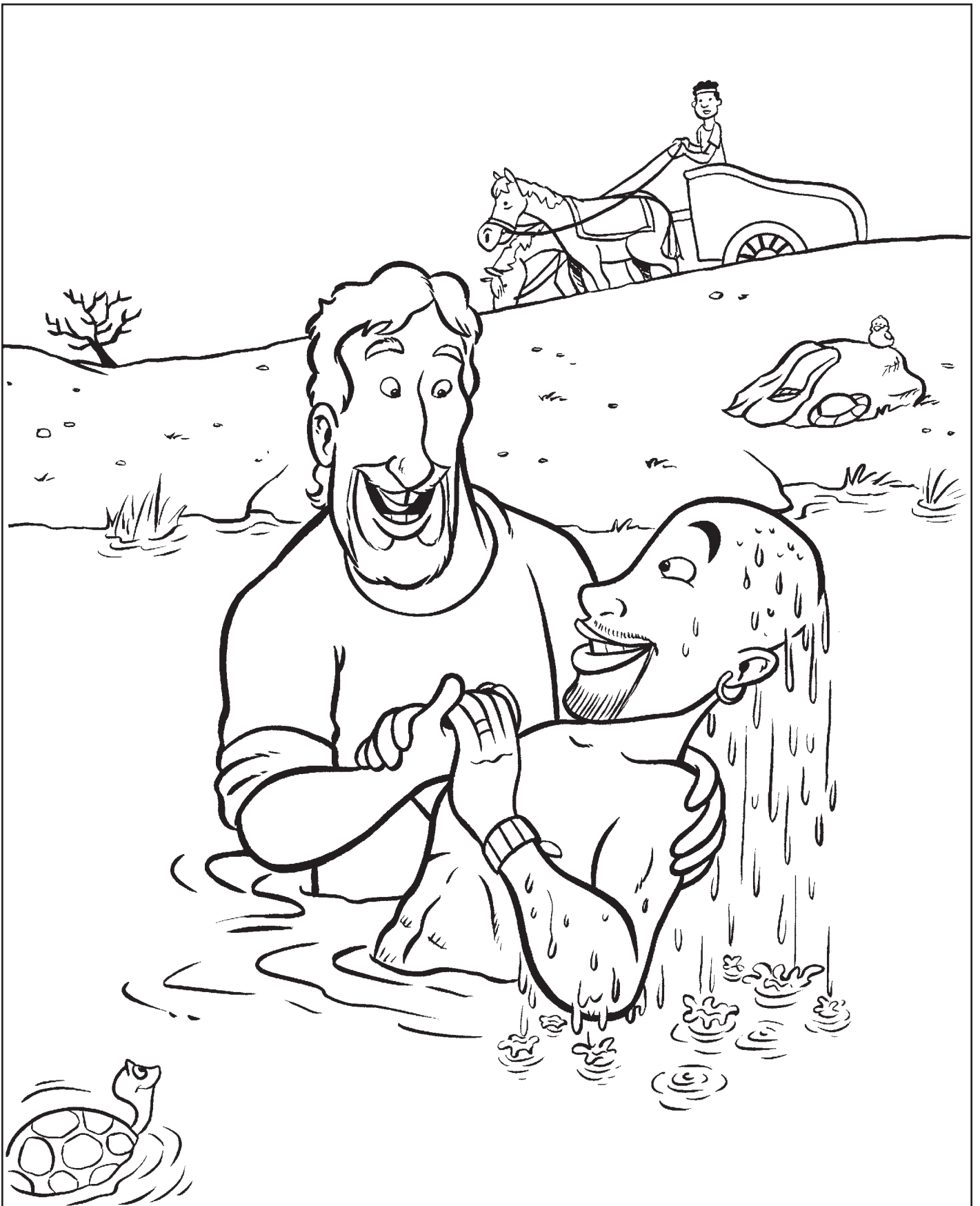
Ethiopian



Philip



"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at the Scripture, preached Jesus to him." —Acts 8:35



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

—Acts 8:9

