

Bible Study 63 Hearing God

BY ALLEN JAMES

Read Acts 8:26-40.

Why had the Ethiopian been to Jerusalem? _____

What book was the Ethiopian reading from in the Bible? _____

From that Old Testament passage, who was the prophet talking about? _____

What was the response of the Ethiopian to Philip’s message? _____

What happened to Philip after the Ethiopian was baptized?

In Acts 8:4-8, we find that God was using Philip in incredible ways to reach Samaria with the gospel. Philip went wherever God sent him. For whatever reason, God called him to leave Samaria and go toward Gaza. To Philip, this might have been confusing, because so many were responding in Samaria. Nevertheless, Philip obeyed.

While on the road, God spoke to Philip and told him to go to a specific place at a specific time. Once again, Philip obeyed. On a desert road, God arranged a meeting for Philip with this Ethiopian governmental official. Many consider this to be a divine appointment with Philip and the Ethiopian. Only God would know that this single governmental official would be the one to take the gospel back to his country and to the continent of Africa. Whether we share the gospel with one or a thousand, we must be obedient messengers, trusting God to lead us to those He is speaking to.

Have you ever experienced a divine appointment? Explain.

Philip seemed tuned in to hearing God. Many things can keep us from hearing God’s direction. What are some things in your life that are keeping you from hearing God?

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Philip chose not to give in to the customs of the day. Culturally, racially and socially, the differences were great between these two men. Yet, Philip followed the voice of God to “that chariot.” It is interesting that the Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53 and that he simply asked Philip to tell him what it meant.

When *on mission* Christians make themselves available to the plan of God, God often places prepared listeners in their way. Philip seized the opportunity to share the gospel successfully and the Ethiopian was immediately ready for baptism. Acts 8:12 shows that Philip knew baptism follows faith in Christ. From that we can deduce that the Ethiopian trusted Christ and wanted to show the world what had taken place in his heart.

There are times in our lives when God arranges an appointment like this. At these times the spiritual harvest is ripe and ready to be gathered. *On mission* Christians must always be ready to follow God's leading as He guides us to encounters with people who are ready to learn the way to know Him. God will provide the appointments. We only need to be prepared and available.

Notice that Philip was familiar with the passage the Ethiopian was reading. We don't need to memorize the entire Bible. However, it is important to know God's Word and to be comfortable explaining the gospel as it is given throughout Scripture.

What can you do daily to help stay “ready” for divine encounters?

If someone were to ask you what it means to believe in Jesus and have eternal life, how would you answer?

In what way(s) do you communicate the gospel (e.g., tract, Bible, testimony, memorized Scripture)?

What verses do you use when sharing your faith?

If you struggled with these questions, commit the following passages to memory as a starting block in sharing your faith: John 3:16; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:9-10, 13 and John 14:6.