

Bible Study: Encounter with Scripture

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means 'queen of the Ethiopians'). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it.'

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. 'Do you understand what you are reading?' Philip asked.

³¹ 'How can I,' he said, 'unless someone explains it to me?' So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

'He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.'

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, 'Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?' ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

Acts 8:26-35

The story focuses around two characters: Philip and the eunuch. Who are they? What do you make of them?

Look at what is said about each character and note what they have in common and how they differ. This is not a natural teacher and student relationship. How would each character have felt talking with the other one?

In verse 27 we hear that the eunuch is returning from worship, yet later, in verse 31, he declares that he does not understand the scriptures he is reading, 'how can I, unless someone guides me?' (Acts 8: 31).

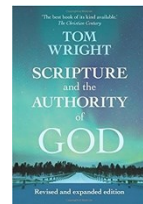
- Is it necessary to understand what the Bible says to worship God?
- Do you always understand what is written in the Bible?
- If you find something that you don't understand, what do you do? Where do you take your questions?

Verse 31 says that the eunuch invited Philip to join him in the carriage. The eunuch took a risk, but so did Philip. Through taking the risk they both gained much.

- With many different interpretations of Scripture, how can you determine what God is saying through it?

Non-Fiction Books

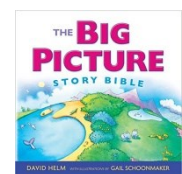
- **Scripture and the Authority of God**



Tom Wright

In this book, Tom Wright demonstrates the indispensable role of scripture as the primary resource for teaching and guidance in the Christian life. It includes two helpful case studies, looking at what it means to keep the Sabbath and at how Christians can defend marital monogamy, and offering bold Biblical insights about them.

- **The Big Picture Story Bible**



David Helm

Everyone loves a good story--especially children! But what we sometimes overlook is that the Bible is more than a collection of great stories. It is the real account of God's love for the world.

The Big Picture Story Bible presents this remarkable true story. Simple words and striking illustrations unfold the storyline of God's Word from Genesis to Revelation. All ages will enjoy this exciting discovery of a God who keeps his big promise.

- How can the Holy Spirit, and others, help in this process?

The Holy Spirit led Philip and gave him the courage to take a risk.

- When has the Holy Spirit guided us, or given us courage?
- Have we ever felt the Holy Spirit's presence when reading our Bibles?

Holy Habits Library

The Holy Habits Library is still in the Wesley Room. It includes great reads including some of the titles on the front of these worksheets. We'd really encourage you to pop in, have a browse and choose something to take away with you. There's a little note book to record what you have borrowed.



Other resources

Any of us can be puzzled by what we may read in the Bible and need help to understand it. 'The Lion Handbook to the Bible' is so helpful that more than three million copies have been sold in the past thirty years and it is now into its 5th edition! It has hundreds of photos, diagrams and articles besides comments on individual Bible verses, as for instance on the verses from Acts in this study paper.

Our Romsey Oasis Christian Book-shop would gladly help you buy a copy! They also have a range of other resources to help with personal Bible study so stop in sometime.

For Personal Reflection from Andrew Roberts

Take some time to review your personal practice of engaging with the Bible. Is it in need of refreshing? Would a season engaging with the Bible in a different way be helpful?

One tool you might like to explore is ORID. Originally developed by the Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs it can be adapted to engage with Biblical Teaching. So:

Observe—what do you notice about the text you are reading?

Reflect (emotionally) - how do you feel as you read the passage?

Interpret—what do you understand the passage to be saying? At this stage commentaries are important and helpful.

Decision—what are you going to do in the light of your engagement with this passage?