|  |
| --- |
| **Philip, the Evangelist** |
| [**Men of the Bible; Some Lesser-Known**](http://biblehub.com/library/milligan/men_of_the_bible_some_lesser-known/index.html)[**— George Milligan**](http://biblehub.com/authors/milligan.htm)  BY REV. GEORGE MILLIGAN, M.A., D.D.  Philip the Evangelist must be carefully distinguished from Philip the Apostle. And though it is little that we are told regarding him in Scripture, that little is very significant. He first comes before us as one of the seven chosen by the early Church at Jerusalem to take charge of the daily ministration of charity to the poor widows (Acts vi. I ff.). And when this work is hindered by the outbreak of persecution following on the death of Stephen, we find him at once departing to enter on active missionary work elsewhere (Acts viii.4 ff.). The fact that he should have selected Samaria as the scene of these new labours, is in itself a proof that he was able to rise above the ordinary Jewish prejudices of his time. And this same liberal spirit is further exemplified by the incident in connection with which he will always be principally remembered.  In obedience to a Divine summons, Philip had betaken himself to the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza. And if at first he may have wondered why he should have been called upon to leave his rapidly progressing work in Samaria for a desert road, he was not for long left in doubt as to what was required of him. For as he walked along he was overtaken by an Ethiopian stranger returning in his chariot from Jerusalem. This man, who was the chamberlain or treasurer of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, had heard somehow in his distant home, of the Jewish religion, and had undertaken this long journey to make further inquiries regarding it. We are not told how he had been impressed; very possibly the actual fruits that he witnessed were very different from what he had expected. But one treasure at least he had found, a Greek copy of the prophecies of Isaiah, and this he was eagerly searching on his return journey, to see if he could find further light there. One passage specially arrested his attention, the touching passage in which the prophet draws out his great portraiture of the Man of Sorrows. But, then, how reconcile the thought of this Messiah, suffering, wounded, dying, with the great King and Conqueror whom the Jews at Jerusalem had been expecting! Could it be that he had anything to do with our Jesus of Nazareth, of whom he had also heard, and whom, because of the Messianic claims He had put forward, the Jewish leaders had crucified on a cross? Oh, for some one to help him! Help was nearer than he thought. Prompted by the Spirit, Philip ran forward to the chariot; and no sooner had he learned the royal chamberlain's difficulties than he "*opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus*" (Acts viii.35).  We are not told on what particulars Philip dwelt; but, doubtless, starting from the prophetic description of the Man of Sorrows, "*despised and rejected of men*," he would show how that description held true of the earthly life of Jesus. And then he would go on to show the meaning and bearing of these sufferings. They arose from no fault on the part of Jesus; but, "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities*." And yet that was not the end. The life which had thus ended in shame had begun again in glory: the cross had led on to the crown. And as thus he unfolded the first great principles of the Christian faith, Philip would press home on the eunuch's awakened conscience that they had a vital meaning for him. "*Repent*," can we not imagine him pleading as Peter had pleaded before, "*and be baptised . . . in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts ii.38). The eunuch's heart was touched, and he asked that he might be baptized. Satisfied that he was in earnest, Philip agreed to his request. And when they came to a certain water, "*they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him*." Thus "the Ethiopian changed his skin," and "*went on his way rejoicing*" to his distant home, to declare in his turn to his countrymen the tidings of great joy.  There are many points of view from which we might regard this beautiful incident, but it is with it in its bearing on the person and character of Philip that we are alone at present concerned. And in considering it further in this light, it may be well to confine ourselves to noticing in what way it gained for Philip his distinctive title of "*the Evangelist*," and consequently what it has to teach us still regarding all evangelistic and missionary work. (from Biblehub.com)  On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza he meets the Ethiopian eunuch. ( [Acts 8:26](http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/8-26.html) ) The History that follows is interesting as one of the few records in the New Testament of the process of individual conversion. A brief sentence tells us that Philip continued his work as a preacher at Azotus (Ashdod) and among the other cities that had formerly belonged to the Philistines, and, following the coast-line, came to Caesarea. Then for a long period--not less than eighteen or nineteen years--we lose sight of him.  The last glimpse of him in the New Testament is in the account of St. Paul’s journey to Jerusalem. It is to his house as to one well known to them, that St. Paul and his companions turn for shelter. He has four daughters, who possess the gift of prophetic utterance and who apparently give themselves to the work of teaching instead of entering on the life of home. ( [Acts 21:8](http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/21-8.html) [Acts 21:9](http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/21-9.html) ) He is visited by the prophets and elders of Jerusalem. One tradition places the scene of his death at Hierapolis in Phrygia. According to another, he died bishop of Tralles. The house in which he and-his daughters had lived was pointed out to travellers in the time of Jerome. (Bible Study Tools.com) (From Smith’s Bible Dictionary). |