



## Paar's Story

### A Scripture Study

November 5, 2015

In about AD 60 as recorded in Acts 8:26-40, Philip was told by an angel to go to the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza. There he met an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official for the queen of his country. Since we don't know his name, I would like to call him *Paar*\*. Paar was on his way home from Jerusalem where he had been worshipping.

The Greek word for "eunuch" (eunouchos) means "guardian of the harem." We don't know if Paar was called a eunuch because he had been castrated or because he was set apart for his responsible position of Treasurer to the Queen. Either way, Paar's manhood was bound to the service of those who were more powerful than he.

Imagine Philip encountering this dark-skinned Paar, arrayed in splendor as he sat on his high, ornate carriage intently reading a scroll. As Philip approached the carriage on this long, dusty road, he heard Paar reading these words from the book of Isaiah (53:7-8): **He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His justice was taken away; Who shall speak of His descendants, for His life is removed from the earth.**

These words were written by Isaiah the Prophet over 700 years before Philip's encounter with Paar; the words are a prophecy of our Lord Jesus' walk to the cross. Could the words have had a strange familiarity to Paar in his own helplessness and restriction? Was he comforted to know that he was not alone in his humiliation? Just like our Lord was silent before the religious leaders, Paar's mouth was silent before those stronger than he... but now...

Now, Paar's heart was open and hopeful, ready to receive the good news of the One Who endured far greater suffering at the cross on his behalf. The prophet's words breathed life into Paar's hunger for validation and truth.

Philip asked, **Do you understand what you are reading?** Paar said, **How can I unless someone guides me?** Then, Philip opened his mouth and, beginning from this Scripture, he preached Jesus to him. (Acts 8:35) Paar's receptive response was immediate; he went into the waters of baptism that God provided along the road. Paar confessed his new Living Savior Who sympathized with his confinement and Who set him free into a wide spacious place in his soul!

\**Paar* is Hebrew for **to open the mouth wide**. Philip opened his mouth wide to speak truth to Paar. Paar opened his mouth wide to receive the truth that would be his joy and delight! The Lord God had given Paar a new name and a new heart!

The prophet Jeremiah declared – **Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart for I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts!** (Jeremiah 15:16)

Lord, keep us open to your words of life!