

Volume 12 Issue 34

August 20, 2017

## OPENINGS

The familiar account of the Ethiopian treasurer's conversion by Philip the evangelist (Acts 8:27-39) features a remarkable number of **openings**. Let's consider these.

First, the Holy Spirit led Philip to an **open door**. The eunuch was a devout man, having traveled hundreds of miles from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship God. Sometimes we're reluctant to share the good news with people we believe "have their own religion." *They'll never change*, we think. But doesn't it make sense to share the gospel with people who have already evidenced an

interest in the things of God?

Philip found in the eunuch an **open heart**. When Philip asked him, "*Do you understand what you are reading?*" the man from Ethiopia replied, "*How can I, unless someone guides me?*" (verses 30-31). Even though this man already knew the Scriptures, he recognized that his understanding was incomplete. He was willing, even eager, to listen and learn.

Philip began the conversation with the eunuch's **open Scriptures**, and he never

let them close: *“Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him”* (verse 35). Philip didn’t start talking about his personal opinions, or some philosopher whose works he’d read, or the latest religious theories spouted by the wise men at his local synagogue. He **opened his mouth** with the word of God. (Isn’t it strange that most religious discussions these days never quite get around to **opening the Book?**)

The treasurer responded to Philip’s teaching with an **open request**: *“See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”* (verse 36). He didn’t argue with the gospel. He didn’t try to deny the command Philip had put before him while he *“preached Jesus to him.”* He simply asked for the opportunity to do what needed to be done for the salvation of his soul.

Philip sought an **open confession** from the eunuch: *“If you believe with all your heart, you may.”* The man from Ethiopia immediately replied: *“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”* (verse 37). Philip didn’t insist that the eunuch subscribe to any creed, or swear by any humanly devised catechism, articles of faith, discipline or doctrine. He invited the Ethiopian to state openly and plainly what he now believed, and the eunuch did just that.

Having stopped the chariot, the two men went down together into **open water** (verse 38). We don’t read about Philip dipping his hand into a basin or a puddle, then sprinkling or pouring water on his companion’s head. The very reason the eunuch stopped in this location was that there was abundant water here, just as there had been in Aenon where John the

baptizer preached (John 3:23).

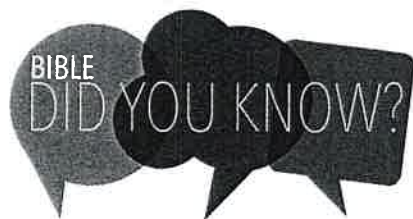
The treasurer submitted willingly to an act of **open obedience**: *“Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”* Philip didn’t just tell the man that because of his faith, his sins were “already forgiven,” as would many religious teachers today. Nor did the eunuch pray a “sinner’s prayer” or any such device. Jesus Christ, through the preaching of the gospel, commanded him to be baptized (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), and this humble man obeyed.

When the eunuch had been baptized, he engaged in **open celebration**: *“He went on his way rejoicing”* (verse 39).

How many **openings** have you missed recently? How many **open doors** did you pass by this past

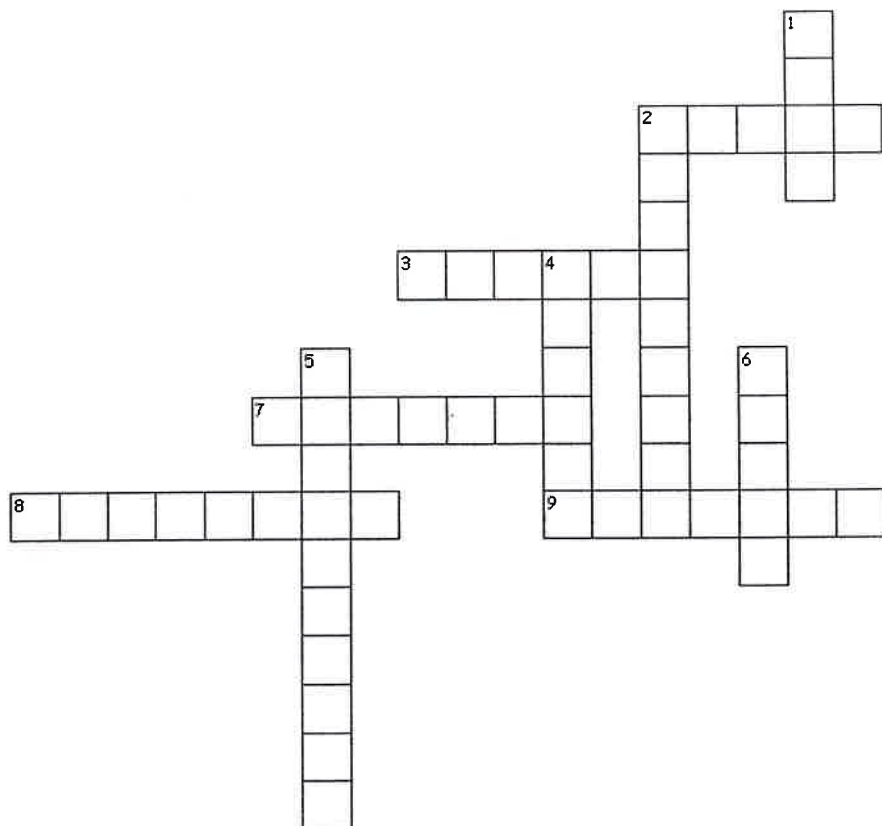
week? With how many **open hearts** did you fail to **open the Scriptures**?

And if you’re not a Christian, why not make the same **open request** and **open confession** the man from Ethiopia made, then openly **obey the gospel** by being buried in **open water**? Then you can **openly rejoice** at God’s gracious forgiveness of your sins.  
— Michael D. Rankins



***Hades is the spiritual realm where departed souls from this life are at. “He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay,” Acts 2:31. “The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment,” Lk. 16:22-23***

# The ULTIMATE CRSSWORD



## ACROSS

2. Peter's Mother-in-law was healed of this (Mk. 1:30-31)
3. Jesus said this is what He came for (Mk. 1:38)
7. James and John left him in a boat to follow Jesus (Mk. 1:19-20)
8. John did this to Jesus in the Jordan River (Mk. 1:9)
9. John the Baptist was not fit to untie these on Jesus (Mk. 1:7)

## DOWN

1. Crowds were amazed that unclean spirits would do this to Jesus (Mk. 1:27)
2. Simon and Andrew were this occupation when Jesus found them (Mk. 1:16)
4. These ministered to Jesus during His temptations (Mk. 1:13)
5. John the Baptist preached a baptism of this (Mk. 1:4)
6. A leper believed Jesus could make him this (Mk. 1:40)