

“Philip the evangelist” in ACTS 21:8. Again keep in mind that Luke is the only writer of scripture to tell us anything about Philip the evangelist. Philip in ACTS 6:3 was also noted to be like the other six chosen with him, men of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom. You will have to do your own counting on this to fully appreciate that Philip, who is later identified as “Philip the evangelist,” is only written about by Luke, and Luke mentions Philip sixteen times. I seriously doubt if Luke had any idea that sixteen is the number pointing to LOVE, but the Holy Ghost knew this, and was the One who inspired Luke to write Philip’s name sixteen times.

You probably had no idea that studying about Luke would reveal so much. I think by now we see that Luke in his writings was really a historian, who wrote about the events concerning Christ, and his Apostles from the birth of John the Baptist until Paul arriving at Rome some nearly sixty years later.

We are going to discuss Philip for a few moments, but first it is imperative that we truly understand what Luke wrote in ACTS 8:1-3, which again is another portion of scripture that we all have probably read dozen of times, yet missed some very important points stated there. ACTS 8:1 *And Saul was consenting unto his death.* (Saul of Tarsus was consenting unto Stephen’s death, showing no remorse whatsoever.) *And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.* (We are going to come back to this fact again down the road if the Lord tarries, but take note of two very important points here. One, for the first time since Pentecost there was a death (Stephen’s) by the persecution against the church at Jerusalem. And we are told that those of this church scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria. In other words they left Jerusalem. Point two, they left Jerusalem except for the Apostles. The Kingdom Apostles remained in Jerusalem; remember this point.) 2 *And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.* 3 *As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.*

Luke then takes up the incredible story of Philip, Philip the evangelist, in ACTS 8, mentioning Philip by name fourteen times in ACTS 8. Fourteen is the number associated with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. What do you think Philip preached about? DELIVERANCE and SALVATION! We will only read a few verses from ACTS 8, but be sure to study this stand alone 8th chapter of ACTS for yourself. ACTS 8:4 *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.* 5 *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.* 6 *And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.* 7 *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.* 8 *And there was great joy in that city.* So we see that Philip, a man full of the Holy Ghost was also very much like Stephen, who did great wonders and miracles among the people, (see ACTS 6:8). ACTS 8:12 records this of Philip’s ministry: *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.* So we see that many got saved because of the ministry of Philip. ACTS 8:14 *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. ...25 And they, (Peter and John) when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. 26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. In our midnight Bible story about Gideon in JUDGES 6:11, 12, and 21 we found the angel of the Lord encouraging Gideon, and found there that the angel of the Lord was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Obviously Philip here in ACTS 8 was in tune with the voice of the Lord, and heeded His instructions without questioning. Philip was then led to the Ethiopian eunuch, who was a Gentile. So Philip the evangelist preached to the*

Gentiles way before Peter did in ACTS 10. Let's just enjoy this unique story for a few verses. ACTS 8:27 *And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, (The Holy Spirit) Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, (We see here that Philip was obedient to the guiding of the Holy Spirit, and wasted no time in catching this chariot. Philip had no idea at first whose chariot he was running to, and it didn't matter to him any way; he ran with haste, without hesitation because the Holy Spirit told him to "join thyself to this chariot." Stated another way, Philip was willing to do the will of the Lord without hesitation or questioning. Obviously Philip also was a man of full of faith like was told us of Stephen in ACTS 6:5 & 8.) and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. (The eunuch was reading from ISAIAH 53:7 & 8 from the Greek version of the Septuagint, which is what is quoted here. Recall from ACTS 6:1 that Philip was among the seven chosen to assist the Greek speaking Jewish widows at Jerusalem, so Philip was no doubt speaking Greek as he communicated with the Ethiopian eunuch.) 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.*

Let's do a time out here before we go on. We mentioned previously that Theophilus and Luke, knew each other from Antioch in Syria, and must have had hours of wonderful fellowship together. And this was before Luke took a pen in hand, and was led of the Holy Ghost to write The Gospel according to LUKE, and The ACTS of the Apostles. And we talked at some length how these two epistles, which are now gospel records, were written by Luke after he interviewed eyewitnesses "to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us" according to LUKE 1:1. The earliest year that Theophilus would have received this letter from Luke, which we know as THE ACTS, would have been 63 A.D. after Paul had first been imprisoned in Rome for two years as is told in ACTS 28:30. And by 63 A.D. Paul would have made five prolonged visits to Antioch, Syria between ACTS 11:26 and ACTS 18:23, by which time he had written 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS. And when they were all together, Luke and Theophilus and Paul must have all enjoyed many hours of fellowship together as they learned Paul's gospel message. So in 63 A.D. or shortly after Theophilus gets this letter from Luke, where Theophilus learns about, or let's say learns more about Stephen, and Philip, and the other of the seven mentioned in ACTS 6:5, who were chosen to assist the Apostles in ministering to the Grecian widows in Jerusalem.

Now put yourself in Theophilus' shoes as he first reads what Luke wrote in ACTS 8:39 & 40, which we just read about the Ethiopian eunuch, and Philip -- *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.* What do you think Theophilus thought as he read this, that *...the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more...* ? Philip was "caught away" from the Ethiopian eunuch and was found some 34 miles away at Azotus! Do you believe

this? Do you believe that Philip was “caught away” some 34 miles? I can tell you from my own research that most of the commentators don’t believe this. Philip was an eyewitness to the fact that he was “caught away” some 34 miles, and it was Philip who conveyed this same information to Luke when Luke got to meet Philip some years later, another point that we will get to shortly. Obviously Theophilus believed that Philip was “caught away” in such a fashion, for Theophilus knew Luke was telling the truth! You can look up for yourself the fact that the Greek word translated “caught away” in ACTS 8:39 is *harpazo* {har-pad'-zo}, number 726 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and is the same word translated “caught up” in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:2 & 4 where Paul wrote of *...such an one caught up to the third heaven...* and *...How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* We find *harpazo* again in 1 THESSALONIANS 4. 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* If you can’t believe that Philip was “caught away” some 34 miles, then how can you believe that you could be “caught up” together to meet the Lord in the air? Remember with God nothing is impossible. Recall these scriptures: GENESIS 18:14 *Is any thing too hard for the LORD?* JEREMIAH 32:27 *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?* MARK 10:27 *And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.* LUKE 1:37 *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* One more scripture HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him (God).* Philip was a man of faith. Again Philip was “caught away” from the Ethiopian eunuch and was found some 34 miles away at Azotus. Ethiopia was south of Egypt, which figures the depths of the world, and Azotus figures “a stronghold.” At the end of this church age our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is going to catch away His Bride from the far reaches of this world, in a similar fashion as Philip was caught away from the eunuch, and take her unto Himself, the strongest stronghold there is. Both Luke and Theophilus had been taught this truth of Paul’s doctrine, that *...the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord...* and they believed Paul’s teaching and were also looking for the Lord’s soon appearing in their life-time.

We are not yet finish with what Luke wrote Theophilus about Philip. Luke’s writing about Philip the evangelist continues in ACTS 21, which is about nineteen or twenty years after the time frame of ACTS 8. And Philip the evangelist is one link that helps us connect the dots between Luke, and Paul, but as we complete studying about what Luke wrote about Philip the evangelist, we find another new link between Paul, and Philip the evangelist, which is quite remarkable since Paul is the former Saul of Tarsus one of the great persecutors of the church of God at Jerusalem during, and immediately after the stoning of Stephen. And Stephen and Philip were part of the seven chosen in ACTS 6 to assist the Kingdom Apostles as we noted earlier. Stated another way, Stephen and Philip were fellow laborers together, and very much familiar with each other, and had no doubt worked together, and certainly loved one another. So what we read in ACTS 21 exemplifies the love of God. This is why Philip the evangelist is found mentioned sixteen times in scripture, sixteen times being the number of LOVE! By the time frame of ACTS 21 Luke is traveling with the Apostle Paul, just days before Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem. Remember Luke had last written of Philip in ACTS 8:40 that Philip *...preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.* These nearly twenty years later Philip is still in Caesarea when Luke writes in ACTS 21:8 *And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. 10 And as we tarried there many days...* . There is no doubt here that Philip the evangelist was one of the seven chosen in ACTS 6:5. In ACTS 21:8-10 we find Philip the evangelist inviting

the former Saul of Tarsus to stay in his house for several days! This could not be possible without the love of God being shed abroad in the hearts of both Philip, and the Apostle Paul by the Holy Ghost; {see ROMANS 5:5}, and their hearts being knit together in the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, {see COLOSSIANS 2:2}. This LOVE shown by Philip here is full overcoming LOVE that all full overcomers must have.

We just mentioned that it had been nineteen or twenty years between the mentioning of Philip the evangelist arriving in Caesarea in ACTS 8:40, and the next time his name came up again in ACTS 21:8. Let's look at what we just read in ACTS 21:8 a little closer. ACTS 21:8 *And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.* How is it that Paul and his company came to the house of Philip the evangelist? Did Paul already know Philip the evangelist, or did someone else in his company know Philip? Luke gives us a trail of clues, so let's start with the statement "...we that were of Paul's company... ."

ACTS 20:3-5 tells us who was in this company of ACTS 21:8. In ACTS 20:2 we find Paul was in Greece, and Corinth was in Greece, so this was where Paul was as we now read from ACTS 20:3 *And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria,... .*

Let's pause here for a moment and refresh our memories. Paul was beginning to conclude his third major missionary journey, and ...*he was about to sail into Syria,... .* What was in Syria? The major city of Antioch where was located the church that had sponsored all of Paul's missionary journeys. It was Paul's intentions to return to Antioch, Syria at the conclusion of his third missionary journey, just like he did at the conclusion of his first, and second missionary journeys. I think this point gets over looked in reading and studying about the Apostle Paul. Paul's first missionary journey was with Barnabas, and is covered in what Luke wrote in ACTS chapter 13 & 14. Paul's first missionary journey ended like this: ACTS 14:23 *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. 24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.* Paul and Barnabas abode a long time with the disciples of Antioch, Syria, because this was the church who had recommended Paul and Barnabas, and had sponsored their missionary journey.

Now jump ahead to ACTS 18 where we will read the conclusion of Paul's second missionary journey, which was about three years long. This missionary journey had begun in ACTS 16 with Silas, and along the way Paul had established churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, had visited Athens, and stayed at Corinth about eighteen months. Now let read starting in ACTS 18:18 where Paul is still in Corinth: *And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.* Luke crams a lot of information in these six verses. Basically Paul had left Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla, and came to Ephesus for the first time, but only stayed there long enough to visit the synagogue of the Jews there in Ephesus at least one time. Aquila and Priscilla stayed there in Ephesus, and Paul sailed to