

# Acts 8:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

## Analysis

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**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:** The eunuch was reading Isaiah 53:7-8, one of Scripture's clearest prophecies of Christ's substitutionary atonement.

The lamb imagery connects to Passover and sacrificial system—innocent substitute bearing guilt in sinner's place. Led as sheep to slaughter indicates passive submission to violence. Jesus didn't resist arrest or crucifixion, willingly laying down His life (John 10:18). This voluntary submission distinguished Christ from mere martyrs; He chose the cross to accomplish redemption.

Like lamb dumb before shearer emphasizes silence—Christ didn't defend Himself before accusers (Matthew 26:63, 27:12-14). This fulfilled prophecy demonstrated divine orchestration. The Suffering Servant's silence contrasts with human instinct for self-preservation and self-justification. It reveals both humility and confidence in Father's vindication.

Opened he not his mouth has double meaning: no verbal defense and no sin (1 Peter 2:22). Perfect righteousness kept silence because no defense was needed against false charges. Reformed theology sees this as crucial to atonement—blameless substitute took guilty's place.

## Historical Context

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Isaiah 53, written approximately 700 BCE, provided detailed prophecy of Messiah's suffering. Jewish interpretation divided over whether this described corporate Israel's suffering or individual Messiah's atoning death. Early Christians unanimously identified the Suffering Servant with Jesus crucified under Pontius Pilate.

The eunuch's reading of this specific passage represents divine providence. Of all possible texts, he encounters prophecy most clearly explaining Christ's death. Philip's task wasn't forcing foreign text onto unwilling hearer but showing how prophecy found fulfillment in recent events—Jesus' crucifixion around 30-33 CE. This conversation occurs 35-37 CE, enabling Philip to recount eyewitness testimony of early Christian community.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Christ's voluntary silence before accusers demonstrate His mission's purpose?
2. What does the lamb imagery teach about substitutionary atonement?
3. In what ways does Isaiah 53's specificity strengthen confidence in biblical prophecy and Christ's identity?
4. How should Christ's refusal to defend Himself shape believers' responses to false accusations?
5. What role does Old Testament prophecy play in establishing Jesus' messianic credentials?

## Interlinear Text

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ἡ δὲ περιοχή τῆς γραφῆς ἣν ἀνεγίνωσκεν ἦν  
G3588 G1161 **The place** G3588 **of the scripture** **which** **he read** **was**  
G4042 G1124 G3739 G314 G2258

αὕτη· ὥς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη καὶ ὥς  
**this** **as** **a sheep** **to** **the slaughter** **He was led** **and** **as**  
G3778 G5613 G4263 G1909 G4967 G71 G2532 G5613

ἀμνὸς ἐναντίον τοῦ κείροντος αὐτοῦ ἄφωνος οὕτως  
**a lamb** **before** G3588 **shearer** **his** **dumb** **so**  
G286 G1726 G2751 G846 G880 G3779

οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ  
**not** **opened he** G3588 **mouth** **his**  
G3756 G455 G4750 G846

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 51:40** (Parallel theme): I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats.

**Jeremiah 11:19** (Parallel theme): But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.

**Romans 8:36** (Parallel theme): As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

**Psalms 39:9** (Parallel theme): I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

**Psalms 39:2** (Parallel theme): I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

**John 1:29** (Parallel theme): The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

**Jeremiah 12:3** (Parallel theme): But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

**1 Peter 1:19** (Parallel theme): But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

**Luke 23:34** (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

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