

Acts 8:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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?

Analysis

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? The eunuch's eager question shows genuine conversion producing immediate desire for public identification with Christ through baptism.

As they went on their way indicates continuing travel and conversation. Philip had preached Jesus from Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:35), explaining crucifixion, resurrection, and salvation. The message clearly included baptism as normative Christian practice. The eunuch's readiness shows gospel's convincing power.

See, here is water reveals watchful eagerness—he noticed water and immediately sought baptism. This contrasts with casual religious interest. True conversion produces urgent desire to obey Christ. The question what doth hinder? anticipates possible obstacles. As Gentile eunuch, he faced exclusions under Old Covenant law (Deuteronomy 23:1), but gospel removes such barriers.

Reformed theology sees baptism as covenant sign and seal, not salvation's cause but its sign. The eunuch's question doesn't suggest baptismal regeneration but understanding that believers identify publicly with Christ through baptism. His eagerness reflects confidence in gospel promises and desire to belong to visible Christian community.

Historical Context

Water in desert regions like Gaza road (Acts 8:26) appeared intermittently. Finding water represented providential timing—God orchestrated both eunuch's conversion and opportunity for immediate baptism. Ancient Christian practice typically baptized new converts quickly after credible profession (contrast with later catechumenate periods).

The eunuch's baptism represents early Christianity's radical inclusiveness. Old Covenant excluded eunuchs from assembly (Deuteronomy 23:1), yet Isaiah 56:3-5 prophesied future inclusion. Philip's willingness to baptize this Ethiopian eunuch demonstrated gospel's barrier-breaking power—no ethnic, physical, or social requirement beyond faith in Christ. This conversion around 35-37 CE contributed to Christianity's early spread into Africa.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does genuine conversion produce eager desire to obey Christ publicly?
2. What does the eunuch's question about hindrances teach regarding gospel's inclusiveness?
3. In what ways does baptism serve as appropriate first step of obedience for new believers?
4. How should churches balance between appropriate preparation for baptism and unnecessary delays?
5. What Old Covenant exclusions does the gospel remove, and what does this reveal about Christ's kingdom?

Interlinear Text

ώς	δὲ	ἐπορεύοντο	κατὰ	τὴν	όδόν	ἥλθον	ἐπί	τι
as	And	they went	on	G3588	their way	they came	unto	a certain
G5613	G1161	G4198	G2596		G3598	G2064	G1909	G5100
ὕδωρ·	καί	φησιν	ό	εὐνοῦχος	Ἰδού,	ὕδωρ·	τί	
here is water	and	said	G3588	the eunuch	See	here is water	what	
G5204	G2532	G5346		G2135	G2400	G5204		G5101
κωλύει	με	βαπτισθῆναι						
doth hinder	me	to be baptized						
G2967	G3165	G907						

Additional Cross-References

Acts 10:47 (Baptism): Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

John 3:23 (Baptism): And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

John 3:5 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.