

Dr. John Williamson, a Canadian geologist, had been slipping along a rain-soaked road that led through Tanzania's back country when, suddenly, his Land Rover sunk to its axles in sticky mud. Pulling out a shovel, he began to dig. After some time, he uncovered an interesting-looking pink stone. Being a geologist and naturally curious about rock formations, he picked it up. The more mud he removed, the more excited he became, but he hardly believed what he saw. When the stone was finally clean, Dr. Williamson had found a diamond!

Any diamond would have been a surprise, but he had found the now famous giant pink diamond of Tanzania. That muddy stone sparkles today in a brooch worn by the Queen of England on occasions, and Williamson is world renowned for his find-accidental though it was.

Similarly the Bible tells of a treasurer who found a treasure. (*Matt. 13:44*) *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.* We see this idea of a sinner who finds a great treasure illustrated for us by an Ethiopian treasurer who found the gospel on a lonely road leading back to Africa from Jerusalem (Acts 8:26-40). Why did he - of all people in the world - find the treasure that day?

THE TREASURER WAS WILLING TO LOOK FOR SOMETHING MORE. This Ethiopian had traveled fifteen hundred miles one way to worship, and was still reading his Bible on the way home! Because he was a eunuch, he had not even been allowed into the temple proper during the ceremonies (cf. Deuteronomy 23:1). You could say he rode three thousand miles to sit in the foyer! He knew something of the Bible but wanted to know more. As he read Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus, he was catching the first rays of the rising sun of Christianity.

QUESTION? Who will find God's treasure today? Those who are willing to look for it. God's treasure is available to all, but it requires a careful and diligent Bible student. Let me call your attention to (*2 Tim 2:15*) *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Study is necessary because the way to heaven is 'hidden' in the Holy Scriptures which Jesus said testified of Him (John 5:39). *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

He taught in parables so that only those sincerely interested would find eternal life (Matt.13:13-15). One time Jesus said that the path to eternal life is strait and narrow and will be found by few (Matthew 7:13-14). One does not find the path by a casual pass through the Scriptures, but rather by a diligent search. No single passage teaches all we need, so we must study to put the pieces together to know the truth which will make us free. *(John 8:31) Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* We should all strive to find, understand, and observe God's will for us - to obey the gospel and become His children. The truth frees us from spiritual death, sinful behavior, slavery of Satan, etc. But one has to seek this freedom.

Several Bible passages mention 'seeking':

- God seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. *(John 4:23) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*
- Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. *(Luke 19:10) For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*
- God rewards those who diligently seek Him. *(Heb 11:6) But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*
- We are to seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33);
- He who seeks, shall find (Matthew 7:7-8).

To discover the truth, one may have to dig out from under childhood teachings and human traditions. Many today, like this treasurer, read their Bibles on the way home from church services and wonder why what they have just experienced in a “so-called” worship” differs so much from what they read in the Bible. We should never be satisfied with a religion less than what we find in Scripture. Christ's church does exist today, and we can be a part of it!

God promised that all who fear Him can learn the truth. *(John 7:17) If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

(John 6:45) It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. He will reward those who truly look. Some are too busy seeking worldly things while others are waiting for some supernatural sign. Some would rather please men than God, but the truly wise person seeks the treasure of the gospel. *(Mat 5:6) Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.* Its value is eternal; it's worth immeasurable.

THE TREASURER WAS WILLING TO LISTEN TO ANOTHER VIEWPOINT.

When Philip gave the treasurer an opportunity to learn more of God's Word, he took him up on it. This treasurer was humble enough to admit to a complete stranger that he did not understand what he was studying. He could have told this aggressive preacher to get lost, but then he would have stayed lost.

The place of the scripture where the eunuch was reading 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 (Acts 8:32).* The treasurer listened as Philip showed how Jesus' death on Calvary and His resurrection from the grave fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy (chapter 53). Rev 13:8 describes Jesus as the *'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'*

Did you know that a goat killed in the traditional manner, sends out blood-chilling cries that can be heard a mile away, but a sheep submits to the butcher's knife without a whimper. Jesus meekly submitted to the outrages perpetrated against Him, and offered no more resistance than a lamb being slaughtered.

Acts 8:33 'In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.' The verdict of Jesus' Roman judge was 'innocent,' but Pilate gave in to the Jews and changed the sentence to crucifixion. *'And who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.'* How could one describe a generation so blind that they did not recognize God's own Son, and then murdered Him? Jesus' premature death was prophesied more than seven centuries before He was even born (Isaiah 53).

This was not what the treasurer had been taught in the worship service he had just left. He learned the truth because he was willing to consider another viewpoint. What about us? Too many religious discussions end with slammed doors and closed minds, raised voices and lowered respect for a friend, clenched fists and closed Bibles. Are

we willing to calmly investigate another perspective? Do we do our own thinking, or do we simply accept what our preacher or parents tell us to believe? **Truth never suffers from investigation**-if we were right in the beginning, further study will simply confirm it. But if we were wrong, we need to know before the Judgment!

THE TREASURER WAS WILLING TO LEAVE HIS PAST. As treasurer for his country, he was doubtless an intelligent and industrious man. His religion was good. He was comfortable with it. He knew its customs, understood its theology. It taught high morals and had benefited his life. But now the preacher suggested that he give it up for something better. It no longer pleased God and was powerless to grant salvation. What went through his mind? Change religions? Go against my family? Offend my friends? Start over? Admit I've been wrong?

Nonetheless, he desired to please God more than others, and was willing to change religions. In heaven no one will ever regret giving up false religion or sinful pleasure.

Philip evidently said something about baptism in their study (although Isaiah 53 does not mention it) because the eunuch interrupted this traveling Bible class to point out that they were passing a suitable place for baptism and he asked Phillip what could hinder him being baptized. According to the book of Acts, something is wrong today when someone claims to preach Jesus, but whose hearers never are taught about baptism. How can any man preach the gospel and answer the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' and not give the answer Jesus told us to give? (*Mar 16:15*) ***And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.***

This treasurer may have been wealthy in Ethiopia before his journey, but he left this scene a far richer man. In the last view we ever get of him, he is pictured with a 'smile on his face.' You will rejoice, too, if you find God's treasure!

Are you willing to dig for the truth, the treasure of eternal life? It entails gospel obedience.

Invitation