

Matt Henry
John 6:1-15
21 March 2018

“Philip’s 6:6”

Grace and peace...

I feel like I have to explain my sermon title just a bit. There is the gas station Phillips 66 that we all recognize and there is a verse in John 6:6 that is key to Philip the disciple. I was just going for a play on words, but it turns out, both kinds of Philips have something in common: testing.

In 1927, the gasoline company was testing their gasoline in oil-rich Oklahoma. The car reached then the top speed of 66 mph on Highway 66. The owners who had the last name of Phillips, decided Phillips 66 would be a good name. The first Phillips 66 service station opened in November 19, 1927, in Wichita. So I didn’t know their name came from where and how the gasoline was tested. But it’s interesting to think about next time you fill up!

I also learned this from Wikipedia, so you know it must be true: “From the late 1930s until the 1960s, Phillips 66 employed registered nurses as "highway hostesses," who made random visits to Phillips 66 stations within their regions. The women inspected restroom facilities to ensure they were well cleaned and stocked.” [I think I found a few restrooms the ladies missed by the way...and chances are Houston Team, you’re going to find some too that could also use

their attention.] “The highway hostesses also served as ambassadors for the company by directing motorists to good restaurants and hotels.” How about that? These highway hostesses also helped people find a good place to eat.

Now, as for Philip the disciple, his main claim to fame also has to do with the notion of feeding the traveling crowd. The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle (aside from the resurrection of course) that is included in all four gospels. We know this story so well, so there’s no need to give a recap of it. But I do want to zero in on the interaction between Jesus and Philip where the testing happens. And that key verse of testing is John 6:6.

With the crowd of thousands headed their way, Jesus decides it’s the right moment to ask Philip a question. He could have directed this to any of twelve disciples, but He chose Philip. I think it’s because Philip is apparently a glass half empty kind of guy. Philip is one of those guys who is prone to focus on what’s not there. He’s acquainted with the logistics—there’s nothing wrong with that! He believes there are 100 pennies in a dollar and that’s that. He knows the bottom line and how money works but he doesn’t know how Jesus works. He doesn’t know kingdom math. So Jesus asks him, “Where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat?” That’s a financial question, but Jesus is getting at his faith. He is testing him. He is calling him out and poking him a little bit. John 6:6

says, Jesus “said this to test him for he himself knew what he would do.” What Jesus is doing for us in asking a telling question that reveals Philip’s personality and how he thinks.

Philip could have responded, “Look, I’m not a Highway Hostess! Those people are on their own!” Philip could have said, “What do you mean “where are we” to buy food for them to eat? We as in “you” right?” Philip had been there at the wedding (John 2:2) and seen Jesus turn water into wine. Maybe he thought Jesus only specialized in beverages, but for whatever reason, that kingdom miracle thinking did not translate into this present moment of eating when all Philip can do is count heads and run the calculations.

“Philip answered him, ‘Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little’” (John 6:7). A denarius is a day’s wage. It’s a logical and true statement. Those are the numbers on the Xcel spreadsheet in Philip’s head. So Philip was tested and he came up with the right answer but the wrong analysis.

Might there be instances in life when we are faced with a quandary, not knowing how to solve it? Humanly speaking, we have the right answer, but the wrong analysis. There may be no human solution. But we have to get into kingdom thinking. Jesus is the one who is creating the situation here. What we

call crisis, He sees as faith opportunity because Jesus is always getting at our faith. Yes, that's all part of the test. Jesus tested His disciples then, and He tests us as His disciples today, remember, in order to strengthen our faith. So Jesus likes to create crises—because how we respond to them says a lot about our faith!

Once the test is given, Jesus is ready to resolve it, so He has the disciples group the people in groups of fifty and in an orderly fashion, He prays, multiplies what the little that the helpful Andrew has pointed out that they do have, and Jesus feeds the masses. And this detail is pretty fascinating when it comes to the leftovers because Jesus tells them to gather up the broken pieces of fish and bread that nothing be wasted and it fills up twelve baskets full. Why is that significant? Because it means each disciple is given the task of carrying a basket. In this way, they are each able to wrap their minds *and their arms* around what had just happened. It's all very intentional on Jesus' part and I find that kind of math on the post-miracle side to be amazing and worthy of our attention. He is involving them in the miracle so they will believe.

The second major story in which we recognize the character of Philip comes in John 14. This is an unforced error on Philip's part. Nobody called on him this time, but he feels like he has to interrupt the Teacher by volunteering an answer. Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father

except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us” (John 14:8). Again, this is a revelatory answer to his character. It shows how far off Philip is. He wants to see the Father directly—a theophany like Moses, Isaiah and Ezekiel had.

This request connects us back to John 1:18. If we go back to the prologue, John says, “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side has made him known.” The literal sense of the Greek there is that the Son is “in the bosom of the Father.” This idea conveys an aura of intimacy, mutual love and knowledge” (Carson, 135). That’s an important verse because it shows the divinity and unity of the Son and the Father. It says the Father is made known through the Son. This verse doesn’t get enough air time in my opinion. We need to request it more often in our hearts.

Let us look at how Jesus responds to Philip. “Have I been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip?” It’s a response of disappointment. Almost a “If you don’t know me by now...” moment. But Jesus clarifies, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father.’ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his

works. Believe in me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves” (John 14:10-11). Stop thinking analytically and humanly. Understand my essence. Know me on a deeper level.

Surely Philip went on to that level of knowledge. He learned to know Jesus with His heart. He went to Turkey, preached in Phrygia, was killed in Hierapolis and buried there as another martyr among the Twelve. Check out this article I found.

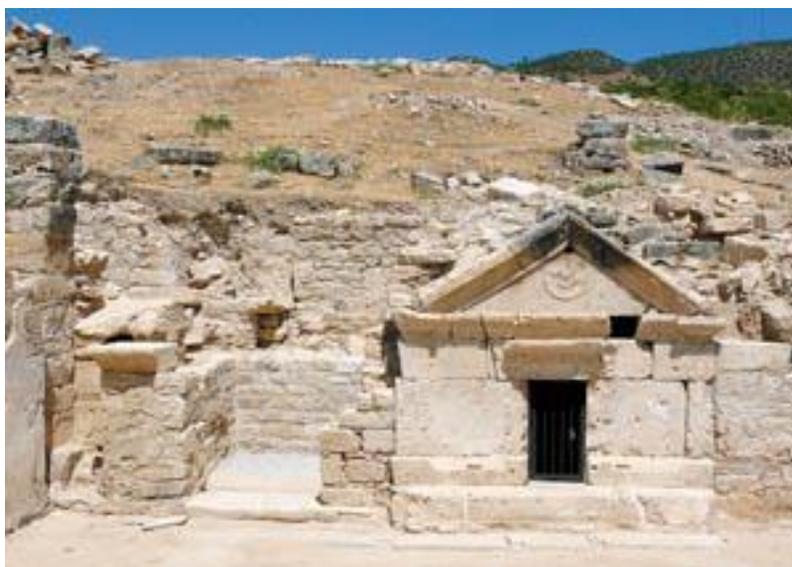
Tomb of Apostle Philip Found

Discovery made at Hierapolis, one of the major Christian sites in Turkey

Biblical Archaeology Society Staff • 01/06/2017

57 7 91 13 18 11

This Bible History Daily feature was originally published in January 2012.—Ed.



Amid the remains of a fourth- or fifth-century church at Hierapolis, one of the most significant Christian sites in Turkey, Francesco D’Andria found this first-century

Roman tomb that he believes once held the remains of the apostle Philip. *Photo: Archive of the Italian Archaeological Mission to Hierapolis.*

At about the same time as the July/August 2011 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review* was hitting the newsstands, containing an article about St. Philip's Martyrium,* author and excavation director Francesco D'Andria was making an exciting new discovery in the field at [Hierapolis](#), one of the most significant sites in [Christian Turkey](#). A month later he announced it: They had finally found the tomb of the martyred apostle Philip.

The tomb wasn't discovered at the center of the octagonal hilltop martyrium as long expected, however, but in a newly excavated church about 40 yards away. D'Andria's team found a first-century Roman tomb located at the center of the new church, which he says originally contained Philip's remains. This early church of Christian Turkey was built around the tomb in the fourth or fifth century, and the nearby martyrium was built around the same time, in the early fifth century.

The remains of the apostle Philip are no longer in the tomb, however. According to D'Andria, the saint's relics were very likely moved from Hierapolis to Constantinople at the end of the sixth century and then possibly taken to Rome and placed in the newly dedicated Church of St. Philip and St. John (now the Church of the Holy Apostles), although 12th-century reports describe seeing Philip's remains still in Constantinople, the seat of Christian Turkey.



This sixth-century bread stamp shows two churches from the site of Hierapolis in Christian Turkey: the domed martyrium on the right, and the newly-discovered

church containing Philip's tomb on the left. *Photo: © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond/The Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund/Photo: Katherine Wetzel.*

This new discovery also sheds light on the wonderful imagery of the rare sixth-century bronze bread stamp from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts that we published in our article about Philip's Martyrium. The structures on either side of the saint can now be identified as the domed martyrium (on the right) and the new Byzantine basilical church containing the tomb of the apostle Philip (on the left), both of which were important Christian sites in Turkey.

Based on Strata, "[Philip's Tomb Discovered—But Not Where Expected](#)," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, January/February 2012.

A team led by excavation director Francesco D'Andria in Hierapolis also uncovered the remains of Pluto's Gate, a site considered an entrance into the underworld in the Greco-Roman period. [Read about it in Bible History Daily.](#)

Notes:

* Francesco D'Andria, "[Conversion, Crucifixion and Celebration](#)," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, July/August 2011.

It's just amazing what they are discovering in our day and age about the disciples! They were tested. Sometimes they failed the test just like we do. But what Philip proves is that even when we fail, even when His ways exceed what our brains can handle, Jesus is completely in control. He likes to challenge our way of thinking because He wants us to believe Him entirely. He can get a lot of faith mileage out of that kind of testing.

In Jesus' name, Amen.