

Jesus Apprentice; Nathanael

John 1:45-51

Introduction: Today we close chapter one of John's gospel. Likewise we close John's abbreviated look at Jesus calling His disciples. Abbreviated or not we have had the opportunity to see discipleship through the eyes of one who lived it and was very capable of describing it. We have seen the examples of Andrew, Peter, and Philip and today we will look at Nathanael. All were ordinary people with different personalities. Yet all of them knew the promise of a messiah and in spite of the twisted religious and self-righteous attitude of the day they were able to be convinced to accept and follow, when they were called by Jesus (the Messiah). As any Christian would, all of these men have their testimony, and from within it we can learn how to correctly follow Jesus and serve Him in a very confusing world. So today let's look at Nathanael and like the others see how the work of Jesus speaks not only to his life but to our lives as well. Notice with me...

I. Nathanael's Introduction to Jesus. V.v.45-46

- A. The soundness of Jesus: the Law and Prophets v.45
- B. The sincerity of Jesus: Nazareth v.46
 - 1. Nazareth had a bad reputation
 - 2. Nazareth wasn't religious or sophisticated

II. Nathanael's Interest in Jesus. V.v.47-48

- A. Was stirred by Jesus knowledge of Nathanael's heart v.47
 - 1. "...Israelite in whom is no guile." Is a reference to Jacob

Before God broke him Jacob was a man of deceit, only after God moved on him did he become Israel. Nathanael was a man who had the spirit of Israel not Jacob. The Lord's disciple (the born again Christian) likewise cannot have a heart of deceit, it must be converted by the new birth of Jesus Christ.

- B. Was stirred by the Lord's grace v.48

Nathanael realized Jesus knew things about him, things that existed before his brother Philip made a formal introduction. The fig tree is not just some casual mention by Jesus, it was very significant. "When thou wast under the fig tree" was a favorite phrase of the Jews to describe their meditation. Earlier Nathaniel had been thinking about the Messiah. Likewise He knows all of that about all of us and Jesus still calls us by grace to serve Him as a born again believer.

Nathanael was inspired by these words, the very person he had been reading about, praying about, and anxiously waiting for not only arrived but was standing face to face with him! Is Jesus standing face to face with you today? Does He inspire you to step up and step out in faith to serve Him? Let's look closer at...

III. Nathanael's Inspiration for Jesus. V.v.49-51

- A. Notice Nathanael's confession: "thou are the King of Israel."v.49
- B. Notice the Lord's revelation. V.50

Nathanael under the fig tree is more than symbolic; it is one of three trees used to represent Israel. The fig tree depicts Israel in its unbelief and fruitlessness under the old covenant, making it a focus of Gods displeasure and discipline. Nathanael on the other hand represented the godly remnant who would receive the blessing of the new covenant by faith in Jesus Christ.

- C. Notice the limitless influence of the Lord. V.51

- 1. It is said with authority; "verily, verily."

This affirms the certainty of the coming statement from Jesus.

- 2. It is revealing authenticity; "angels of God ascending and descending"

Angels are the creation of God, and Jesus is God incarnate for the souls of man. The born again not only realizes the authenticity of Jesus but realizes that God had already established Himself through angels. Notice they are ascending first; meaning there already here, working between earth and heaven. There ministry upon Jesus will be noticed, accepted and proclaimed by all those who truly know Him.

Conclusion: As I opened with we have now looked at the testimony of Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael. Four men who knew each other, worked the same trade and lived in the same area. These four give us a picture of every born again Christian that was and ever will be called to salvation by Jesus Christ. Including you and I today. **Will our musicians come with a hymn of invitation to close our worship?** Chapter one of John's gospel brings us face to face with two questions; one of these questions will apply to you. First; are you born again through Jesus Christ today? Only you and the Lord Jesus know that answer. I can help you with this much, family name, time in the church family, baptism, reputation or even morals can give you eternal life and fellowship with the Lord Jesus. That comes exclusively through your admission of being a sinner and asking forgiveness and repenting of your sin. Second; if you are satisfied in your salvation are you faithful in your service to the Lord today? Every disciple we are given shows us a heart of faithfulness. If you are faithful to the Lord today your life will show it through your participation in His work, through obedience to His will. Are you serving the Lord to your greatest ability or are you asking the Lord to just settle for what you choose to give Him? He is worthy and deserving of your very best from this day forward, if you're not already, leave today with Jesus in your heart, first as savior, then as Lord over your life. As we sing will you come!