



GRACE

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ☐ DEO ☐ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The First Disciples

October 24, 2004

INTRODUCTION

- Continuation of the “momentous week”:
 - **Day 1:** John’s Testimony Regarding Jesus to the Jewish Delegation (1:19-28)
 - **Day 2:** John’s Encounter with Jesus [“the next day”...“Lamb of God”] (1:29-34)
 - **Day 3:** John’s Referral of Two Disciples to Jesus (1:35-39)
 - **Day 4:** Andrew’s Introduction of His Brother Peter to Jesus (1:40-42)
 - **Day 5:** Philip and Nathanael follow Jesus (1:43-51)
 - **Day 7:** Wedding at Cana (2:1-11; “on the third day”)

Verses 35-37

- Before these first two disciples believed in the Lord Jesus, they were John’s disciples
 - This, likely, explains why the disciples followed the Christ so quickly
 - They had been prepared by John the Baptist for the Coming One. Once the Baptist identified Jesus as the Messiah, the Lamb of God, his disciples quickly followed Him.
 - It is also important to note that the disciples associated Jesus’ identification as “the Lamb of God” with his Messiahship
- John speaks of two disciples here
 - The first is Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother (verse 40)
 - The second is unnamed
 - However, many believe it was John the Evangelist

- Note that John even mentions the hour of the encounter (verse 39), indicating (potentially) that this encounter had a profound impact on the author of the Fourth Gospel

Verse 38

- Jesus quickly asks His first two disciples, “What do you seek (want)?”
 - This is the question Jesus asks every believer who comes to Him.
 - Our Lord examines our heart.
 - Why does the unbelieving world sometimes seem to “embrace” Christ?
 - READ Luke 14:25-35
 - How does Jesus’ questioning His disciples relate to our evangelistic efforts?
- The new disciples called Jesus “Rabbi”.
 - This literally means “my great one.”
 - It was a title of honor used by a student to his master
- The new disciples ask Jesus, “Where are you *staying*?”
 - The word here for *staying* literally means “to remain” or “to abide.”
 - Note the dualism of “staying”
 - Where are you “living.”
 - Where are you (spiritually) remaining?
 - This phrase may be used by the Baptist symbolically
 - See John 15
 - We, as believers, are to *remain in Him*.

Verse 39

- The disciples “stayed” with Him
 - When is the last time you have truly “stayed” with Christ?
- They stayed with Him from about 4:00 p.m. (the tenth hour) on.
 - The Jewish system of counting time (hours) went from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 - Therefore, it could be said, the tenth hour (beginning at 6:00 a.m.)

Verses 40 - 42

- Notice that the very first thing that Andrew did was find his brother Simon Peter and proclaim, “We have found the Messiah.”
- Andrew “brought him (Peter) to Jesus”
 - Each time we see Andrew, he is bringing someone to Jesus

- Jesus changes Peter's name
 - Note the significance of a name change in Ancient Israel
 - "Here in John 1...the focus is much less on what this name change means for Peter, than on the Jesus who knows people thoroughly, and not only 'sees into' them but so calls them that he makes them what he calls them to be....
This is not so much a merely predictive utterance as a declaration of what Jesus will make of him." D.A. Carson
 - Peter means "rock"

Verse 43 - 44

- Who is the "he" in the phrase, "The next day **He** purposed to go into Galilee"?
 - It is either Jesus or Andrew
 - I believe that the correct rendering is "The next day Andrew purposed to go into Galilee."
 - This would explain why John uses the word *first* in verse 41
 - Therefore, it could be assumed that *secondly*, he found Philip
 - The noun "Jesus" is inserted before the word said, potentially indicating a change of subject
 - Everyone who comes to Jesus in this chapter does so because of the witness and testimony of another person.
 - John the evangelist seems to be emphasizing the theme of the importance of **bearing witness**
 - The evangelist may be emphasizing that God has sovereignly chosen the means by which people are saved
 - This underscores the importance of evangelism
- Jesus simply states, "Follow Me."
 - The verb "to follow" often means "to follow as a disciple"
- Andrew, Peter and Philip were from Bethsaida
 - Bethsaida means "house of the fisherman" or "Fishertown"
 - It was located just east of where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee

Verse 45

- Possibilities for the identity of Nathanael:
 - Not a historical character, but a symbol (the name means "God gives")
 - An unknown disciple
 - Matthew
 - Bartholomew
 - It is likely that this is the correct identity

- In three of the four apostle lists in the Gospel, Bartholomew is linked with Philip
 - Matthew 10:3
 - Mark 3:18
 - Luke 6:14
- John again emphasizes here (“We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote) the truth that **Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures.**

“The earliest disciples could not have identified Jesus as the promised Coming One, the Messiah, without believing that the Scriptures pointed to him, for that was part of the common stock of Jewish messianic hope.”

D.A. Carson

- Philip identifies Jesus in the proper, First Century manner: (1) the name of his town or village and (2) the name of His (reputed) father.
- John often uses irony in his communication in the Fourth Gospel. It is consistent with this irony that John “should allow Jesus to be ignorantly described as ‘son of Joseph’ while himself believing that Jesus had no human father” C.K. Barrett

Verse 46

- Nathanael was from Cana (a town in Galilee)
- Nathanael’s statement, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” reflects several points.
 - There were likely local rivalries between the different towns in Galilee
 - Nathanael found it hard to believe that the Messiah could come from such an insignificant town.
 - This statement obscures the truth that Jesus was born in Bethlehem
 - Jesus was known as “Jesus of Nazareth” not “Jesus of Bethlehem”
 - To be known as being from Bethlehem would have conjured up thoughts of royalty and Davidic overtones by those in first century Palestine
 - This further reflects the humility of the Messiah

Verse 47

- Jesus’ declaration, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” is a direct parallel to Jacob in the Old Testament:
 - **READ Genesis 27:35-36**
- In other words, Nathanael was an Israel, not a Jacob!

- This statement reflects at least two truths:
 - Nathanael was an honest, straightforward individual
 - Jesus' twelve disciples would begin the Church, the new Israel
 - **An Israelite was a descendant of Jacob (Israel)**
 - **Jesus himself was the true Jacob**
 - **The Gospel of Matthew “assimilates the historical experience of Israel as a nation to the life of Jesus – the ultimate in typological fulfillment. Like Israel, Jesus goes into the wilderness to be tested, and his twelve disciples represent the twelve tribes [Israelites] who are sent out to conquer the land.” Gerald Bray**

Verse 48

- Nathanael's [apparent surprise] reaction to Jesus' statement about him reveals the truth and accuracy of Jesus' description of him.
- In Jewish literature, to include the Old Testament, the fig tree symbolizes the home.
 - See 1 Kings 4:25; Isaiah 36:16; Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10
- The shade of the fig tree was also associated with a place of meditation and study
- Therefore, Jesus is revealing his supernatural powers, knowing that Nathanael had communed with God in the privacy of his home.

Verse 49

- Now Nathanael calls Jesus, “Rabbi”
- He, then, calls Him, “the Son of God...the King of Israel.”
 - Nathanael is recognizing Jesus as the Messiah
- ***Son of God***

- In the Old Testament, Israel is the son of God (Exodus 4:22-23; Deuteronomy 1:31; 32:6; Jeremiah 31:9; Hosea 11:1)
 - Jesus now is the TRUE Israel
- Viewing the Son of God as the Messiah is directly dependent upon certain Old Testament passages.

- Psalm 2:6-12

6

"But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

7

"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.

8

'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

9

'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

10

Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.

11

Worship the LORD with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.

12

Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish
in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

- 1 Samuel 26:17, 21, 25;
- 2 Samuel 7:14;
- Psalm 27:2

- **In these passages, Sonship and Davidic royalty are interwoven**

- The term "Son of God" also reveals the "unique relation of oneness and intimacy" between Jesus (God the Son) and the Father.

□ *King of Israel*

- Nathanael's is clearly acknowledging that Jesus is *his* King – the King of Israel
 - Further, this statement reveals that Nathanael is **submitting to the authority of his King.**

- The term “King of Israel” was used by Palestinian Jews
- Jesus is the true Sovereign, the ruler of the universe, worthy of all praise, honor, and glory

Verse 50

- Jesus recognizes that Nathanael is amazed at His (Jesus’) supernatural knowledge; however, Jesus state, “You will see greater things than these.”
 - **Jesus’ signs** (the first of which will happen shortly)
 - Nathanael will see and experience the greatness of the Son of God

Verse 51

- This is a direct reference to Jacob’s vision (Jacob’s Ladder) in Genesis 28:12; 10-17
- “What Jesus tells Nathanael, then, is that he himself will be the place of much greater divine revelation than that given at previous occasions. Jesus will mediate greater revelation than Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Isaiah...” Andreas Kostenberger
- **Jesus is the “ladder to Heaven” (John 14:6)**
 - **The ladder will be superceded by the CROSS OF CHRIST**
- ***Son of Man***
 - This is Christ’s self-designation
 - The Son of Man refers to Jesus’ earthly activity, His suffering [on the cross], and His glory
 - Reference to Daniel 7:13-14

¹³

"I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.

¹⁴

"And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;

And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.

- As the incarnate Word, Jesus is the Lamb of God providing atonement for sin; a rabbi, a Jewish religious teacher; and, as the Son of Man, the place of superior revelation. In all these things, the latter part of John 1 further develops John's emphasis in the Prologue that Jesus is the preexistent Word became flesh through whom God dwelt among His people."
Andreas Kostenberger

Names / Descriptions of Christ in John 1:

- (1) The Logos
- (2) God
- (3) The Light of men
- (4) The true Light
- (5) The one and only beloved from the Father
- (6) A greater than John the Baptist
- (7) Jesus Christ
- (8) The Lord
- (9) The Lamb of God
- (10) He that baptizes with the Holy Spirit
- (11) God's Chosen One
- (12) The Son of God
- (13) Rabbi
- (14) The Messiah
- (15) He of whom Moses and the prophets wrote
- (16) The King of Israel
- (17) The Christ
- (18) The Son of Man