

Hook - Ignatius had a very high view of the 12 Apostles. He says: We esteem, honor, and love the apostles more than the other saints, because they served God more faithfully and because they loved Him more perfectly.

Billy Graham: The New Testament says nothing of the Apostles who retired and took it easy.

Title: The 12 that Jesus Picked

So far we have covered two sets of brothers... Peter and Andrew, and, James and John. We will cover 2 more apostles today.

But before we do... Can you name the 12 Apostles?

Remember the trick? - 5J - 2 P - BASTM

- 5J: John, James, James, Judas, Judas
- 2P: Peter, Philip
- BASTM: Bartholomew, Andrew, Simon, Thomas, Matthew

The Apostles went through a process before actually becoming the 12.

4 Step Call of the Apostles

1. Follow me (Come be my disciple) – There were many disciples of Jesus.
2. Leave all to follow me
3. Chosen to be an apostle
4. Sent out to minister – The Apostles actually as part of the 70 were sent out. Then, in Acts 1 after the resurrection, Jesus sends them out again this time to a broader area: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

In the Gospels and Acts, there are 4 Lists of the Apostles

- Peter is always first
- Peter, James, John and Andrew are always in the first 4.
- 3 sets of 4 Apostles
 - Same 4 in each set – on all 4 lists
 - And, each group of 4 always starts with the same person
 - Seems to imply that Jesus had a leader for each of the 3 groups (Peter, Philip, James the son of Alphaeus)
- We know the most about those in the beginning of the list. And, as you go down the list, we know less and less about those apostles. --- It seems that the lists are organized by closeness to Jesus.
 - Jesus was the closest to the 1st four. The next group he was less close to. And the next group even less.
 - **Lesson Here:** You can't be super close to everyone. Even Jesus had his inner circle who he was very close to.
- Judas is always last – The infamous Judas. The betrayer. The least of the apostles is always at the end.

Turn in your Bible's to John 1

It's interesting how some of the disciples seemed to come in pairs: Peter and Andrew, James and John... Then, there's...

Philip and Nathanael/Bartholomew

They're not brothers, but Philip brings Nathanael to Jesus similar to how Andrew brought Peter.

These two come as a pair, but we'll focus on **Philip** first.

All of the gospels record Philip's name, but it is in the gospel of John where Philip truly comes to life.

In John, we see that Philip is commonly stating his ignorance.

You've heard Abraham Lincoln's saying: ***It's better to be quiet and thought a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt.***

Well, Philip wasn't worried about that.

At the feeding of the 5,000, it is Philip who says...

John 6:5-7 - "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat? ...Two hundred denarii (\$50,000) worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little."

Jesus talks about feeding these people. Philip states the obvious. No way, no how Jesus.

Did he have less faith the other disciples? No. I think he just wasn't afraid to say what everyone else was thinking.

He's the guy that doesn't mind acknowledging the pink elephant in the room.

In **John 12:21-22**, the Greeks come to Philip and say: **"Sir, we wish to see Jesus."**

Now, **why did those Greeks go to Philip?** I'm guessing Philip was a friendly guy. He probably smiled.

When I want someone to help me – say I want them to take a picture of our family – I look for someone who ... based on their body posture looks kind, humble, and friendly. Philip was probably that kind of guy.

Also, they may have heard his name. Philip is a Greek name, and he was from a community that had an international Greek speaking community. Most likely Philip spoke Greek.

So these Greeks come to him. And, he's NOT quite sure what to do.

- Does Jesus want to talk to Greeks?
- Would he rather focus on Jews?
- Should I interrupt Jesus for this or not?
- What do I do?

Again, Philip is NOT afraid to admit his ignorance. So he goes and asks Andrew. Andrew decides it's ok, so Philip and Andrew take them to Jesus.

In **John 14:8**, Philip, zealous to know God better, says...

"Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

Jesus corrects Philip...

John 14:9 - Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip?"

But then he gives him a beautiful and comforting answer:

John 14:9 - Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

Like Father like Son. Jesus is saying... The Father is just like me. The way I do things. My values. My priorities. My character. My concerns. That's what the Father is like.

If you know me, then you know Him. There isn't anything in the way of character or values where the Father that differs from me.

Now, let's rewind back to where Philip first meets Jesus.

John 1:43-44 - ⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Jesus found Philip.

Like John Newton, Philip could sing Amazing Grace. I once was lost, but now I'm found.

Not that I found grace, but that grace found me.

Jesus was after Philip. He was looking for Philip. Jesus **decided** to go get Philip. He went to Galilee and he **found Philip**.

Philip is from **Bethsaida** like Peter, and likely he too was a fisherman. He's from **Galilea** like all the disciples with the exception of Judas Iscariot.

Jesus finds him, and he very simply says: **"Follow me."**

He says the same thing to us today: "Follow me." --- Whatever else you may be running after, lay it aside and follow me.

And in a moment, Philip makes a choice that changes the rest of his life. He follows Jesus.

In so doing, Philip says: "Yes. I will follow you. You will be my teacher. You will be my Lord. I will listen to you. I will learn from you. I will do what you say. I will follow you."

Not only will Philip follow, but he will also bring others to Jesus. And, he will do so right away.

Philip is a humble man. He's not afraid to make a mistake. He's not afraid to admit his ignorance. He's not too proud to **follow** someone. He's not too proud to **ask** for more information.

He's also brave!

Philip is not afraid to take a risk.

And, he's not afraid to introduce a skeptic to Jesus.

A skeptic named **Nathanael**.

Nathanael was from **Cana** in Galilee...where Jesus did the miracle of turning the water to wine at a wedding.

Scholars think that Nathanael was the only disciple who came from royal blood. He may have been related to **King David**. His name means Son of Tolmai. Tolmai was the king of Gesher whose daughter, **Maacah** married king David. Maacah was actually the mother of **Absolom**.

Likely, his first name was **Nathanael** and his second name was **Bartholomew**.

It's **Philip** that brings Nathanael to Jesus.

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Philip's gospel message: We **found** the messiah! We found the savior.

And, notice Philip's specificity: **Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph**

- Name
- The town he's from
- Name of his father

To fully identify who Jesus is.

Details matter in the kingdom of God. God's word is full of details.

Theological details are called **doctrine**. These details are very important because they help us distinguish between truth and error. They help us distinguish our God from the false gods of other religions.

Doctrine helps us clarify who that person is who can truly save our souls from the wrath of God.

That person is **Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph**.

Then, Nathanael speaks...

⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" [I don't remember Nazareth being mentioned in the prophets.] Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Notice Philip's wise response: **"Come and see."**

I don't have to prove it to you. Check him out. And, you'll see that there is no one like Jesus.

When you're sharing the gospel, you can use some apologetics if you like. There's a place for that.

But you might just want say: "Come and see."

Read the gospels for yourself. Find out about Jesus, and you'll see that there is NO ONE like Him.

He is the fulfillment of all the messianic prophecies. He is as John the Baptist said, "The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." He is wise. He is king. He is powerful and does all kinds of miracles. He loves children. He gives his life on the cross to save us.

There's no none like him. "Come and see."

Immediately, Nathanael goes with Philip to see Jesus.

Nathanael is a man of action!

Once he knows the right thing to do, he does it.

Once you know, it's time to go.

How many of us get a revelation of truth, and we just sit on it?

I know **I should** go there. I know I should do that. I know I should change. I should trust God.

I'll get to it eventually.

Not Nathanael. Immediately, he goes to see Jesus.

But before Nathanael sees Jesus, Jesus sees Nathanael. Jesus has been watching Nathanael, and Jesus likes what he sees.

⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

Nathanael is **NOT deceitful** at all. There is No deceit in him.

He is a man of authenticity. He always tells the truth. You can trust Nathanael. He is a man of his word.

One translation says: in whom there is no guile

He's not sly or cunning.

He says what he means, and he means what he says.

If he says he's going to be there, he's going to be there.

If he says he's going to get it done, he's going to get it done.

You don't have to wonder. Nathanael is dependable.

Jesus honors Nathanael...

~~⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"~~ ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?"

Nathanael's response seems almost proud.

You or I might backpeddle at such a compliment. "Oh gosh. I'm not really that great. There's probably some deceit in me."

But no. Nathanael is a straight arrow, and he knows he's a straight arrow. It's not an issue of pride. It's just the truth.

We know it's the truth because Jesus said it. Jesus and Nathanael both knew it was the truth as well.

And, Nathanael is not one to campout on a compliment. He doesn't say "Awww...Thank you. That's really nice of you". He doesn't deflect "praise the Lord".

He cuts to the chase: **"How do you know me?"**

I don't know you. I've never seen you before. So, how do YOU know me?

The truth is that Jesus has known Nathanael for a long time.

Ephesians 1:4 - ~~He chose us in him before the foundation of the world.~~

Jesus knew him, and Jesus chose him before the foundation of the world.

Before Jesus said, "Let there be light," he thought of Nathanael. He delighted in Nathanael. He decided that Nathanael would be his disciple.

And for you as well, you who are followers of Jesus... Jesus has known you for a long time. He has watched you with a smile. He has delighted in you. And, before the foundation of the world. Before he separated the light from the darkness, you were on his mind, and he chose that you would be his.

He sang that song...

I have decided this one is my child.

And I won't let go. No I won't let go.

Nathanael says: How do you know me?

Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

I've been watching you Nathanael. I saw you under the fig tree.

Nathanael knows that no one saw him under the fig tree. He was all alone.

But somehow Jesus saw him.

You or I might think: Lucky guess, Jesus. Interesting coincidence. But...

⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Nathanael turns on a dime.

One minute, he's Mr. skeptical: Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

The next minute, he has decided to give the rest of his life to this man. He is completely convinced that Jesus is the messiah. Jesus is the Son of God. He is the King of Israel.

Jesus himself seems surprised by Nathanael's bold declaration:

⁵⁰ Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."

Buckle up buttercup. Oh, you are in for a ride.

⁵¹ ~~And he said to him~~, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

We are just getting started, Nathanael. This is going to get good. It's going to get real good!

Here Jesus alludes to **Jacob's ladder** from Genesis 28 where the angels are ascending and descending. It's a picture of Heaven connecting with Earth. Of God connecting with mankind. Of humanity being brought into loving relationship with their creator.

This is a picture of what the gospel accomplishes. It's a picture of what Jesus came to accomplish on earth.

Nathanael is **one of the 7 disciples** that Jesus appears to after the resurrection at the Sea of Tiberius. Of the other 6 disciples, the only ones that are named are *Peter, Thomas, James and John*.

Nathanael started well. And he lived well.

According to tradition, Nathanael was a great searcher of the Scriptures. He was a scholar of the Old Testament books of the law and of the prophets.

He was one of the church's **most adventurous missionaries**. It was said that he preached in **Armenia**, and he preached with Philip in **Phrygia** and Hierapolis.

The Armenian church claims that Nathanael is their founder and martyr.

However, according to other traditions he preached the gospel in **India** and most scholars think that he actually died as a martyr in India.

According to one tradition, Nathanael died a very painful death. He was flayed alive with knives. While still alive, he was cut with knives and his skin was peeled off of his body. Then, he was beheaded.

According to another tradition, he was crucified.

TRANSITION: Nathanael wasn't the only one that Philip lead to Christ.

Philip's Ministry

In Acts 6, there are 7 deacons assigned to take care of widows. One of the seven is named Philip. Some scholars think that is the Apostle Philip. But I doubt one of the apostles would be selected for such a task.

Like Peter, I think that Philip devoted himself to prayer and the teaching of the Word.

Philip is the one who lead the **Ethiopian Eunuch** to Christ in Acts 8.

Philip hears the Ethiopian reading Isaiah 53. He explains the passage, shares the gospel and leads him to Christ. The Ethiopian says:

Acts 8:37 - "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

So Philip baptizes him, and when the Ethiopian comes up out of the water, Philip disappears.

Acts 8:40 says

But Philip found himself at Azotus,

I think Philip was just as startled as the Ethiopian man. He didn't say, "Beem me up, Scotty." He wasn't expecting to be teleported.

But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

So Philip preached in **Jerusalem**, Azotus and all the way to Caesarea.

According to tradition, Philip also preached in **Phrygia** and Hieropolis with Nathanael.

Philip's Death

There are differing traditional views of the account of Philip's death. Some say that he was crucified.

Another says that Philip died from hanging. And, while he was hanging from the tree, he requested that his body be wrapped in papyrus and **NOT linen** because he didn't see himself as being worthy of having his body wrapped in cloth like Jesus body was wrapped.

Philip

- Follower of Christ
- Lead others to Jesus
- Uses wisdom in responding to the skeptic
- Humble
- Not afraid to ask questions and reveal his ignorance
- Zealous to know God

Nathanael

- Found by Christ
- A man without deceit
- A dependable man
- A straight arrow
- A student of God's Word