

Preached on 5/21/23 at GBC - Ruston

"An Israelite INDEED"

John 1:43-51

If you go back a few verses in this chapter, you'll see that "**the JEWS**" were looking for the "**MESSIAS**", which means '**THE ANOINTED**', so much so that they sent people to inquire about John the Baptist and his ministry of baptism – "*And this is the record of John, when **the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?***"(Jn.1:19-22) The Greek word translated "**the Jews**" means 'belonging to the Jewish nation', but if we let Scripture interpret Scripture, we know it is a reference to the **PHARISEES** – "*And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.*"(Jn.1:24) **Keep this in mind:** The Pharisees and the Sadducees, those who were considered "**masters**" in Israel, the instructors of all things spiritual to Israel, they were clueless concerning the true nature and purpose of the Messiah promised and prophesied about in the Scriptures – "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: **and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.***"(Jn.5:39,40) They were looking for one who would deliver them from earthly dominion, and were oblivious to their need of salvation from their sins – "*But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.*"(Jn..15:21,22)

Even though "**the JEWS**" were in darkness concerning the true nature and office of the God sent Messiah, God has always had a people in the world who He causes to look for and find "**the promised seed**" – "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*"(Jn.6:37) From Eve right after the fall, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to King David, to old Simeon, and now to John the Baptist and those mentioned in our text, they were all looking for Messias. John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ pointed Christ out to his followers when he saw **HIM** – "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold **the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.***"(Jn.1:29) All God's elect, taught of God understand and believe on "*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" Notice what happened the day after John pointed to the Lamb – **Vss.35-40**. In these verses we see our Lord's faithfulness to both His office and His work, seeking out and finding His lost sheep, calling them by **NAME** to Himself. In this instance, it involved Andrew, and his brother Simon Peter. Andrew had **HEARD** from the mouth of John the Baptist about Christ as "**the Lamb of God**", and by God's grace he believed and followed Him – "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Immediately, Andrew then sought out his brother Peter, **BRINGING HIM TO JESUS** – **Vss.41,42**. Can't we safely conclude that this is the fulfillment of Christ's words – "*But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; **but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.***"(Lk.5:30-32) Keep this in mind as we look at Christ's dealing with these next two men who would eventually be His apostles.

Let's read our text – **Vss.43-49**. The **FIRST THING** that jumps out at me in these words is the **FACT** that our Lord sought out and **FOUND** Philip – “*The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip.*” The word translated “*findeth*” means ‘after searching, to find a thing sought’. It is the **SAME WORD** our Lord used in the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin – **Turn to Lk.15:5,6; 8,9**. In each instance, whether it was the lost sheep, the lost coin Andrew and Peter, or now Phillip and Nathanael, they were all in the same condition – **THEY WERE LOST!** But thank God, our Lord is “*not sent but to the LOST SHEEP of the house of Israel.*”(Matt.15:24) Remember what our Lord said to Zaccheaus – “*And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*”(Lk.19:9,10)

Here's the **SECOND THING** these passages teach us – These men were all brought to a knowledge and understanding that they were **SINNERS**, and as **SINNERS** they looked for, waited for, and by God's grace embraced the Messiah as their Savior – “*Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*”; “*Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*”(Vss.45,49) The **JEWS (including the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the Sadducees)** were looking for a **KING** as well, but as we've already seen, they were looking for the wrong deliverance, and therefore they were looking for the wrong kind of king. Matter of fact, every unregenerate sinner is looking for the wrong king – “*He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*”(Matt.27:42); “*When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*”(Jn.6:15) When the Lord stood before Pilate being accused of subverting Roman rule, Pilate asked Christ directly – “*Art thou the King then?*” **Listen to Christ's response** – “*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*”(Jn.18:37) The unregenerate mind cannot see, nor can it bow to the reality that they are under the kingship of sin, under its guilt, condemnation, and power, and since they can't see this reality, like the JEWS, they don't think they need deliverance from sin – “*As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: [but] the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*”(Jn.8:30-36) Unlike these JEWS, Andrew, Peter, Phillip, and Nathanael were looking for the promised seed. These men had heard the same Law of Moses, the same Psalms, and the same Prophets as the Scribes and Pharisees, yet they were looking for and hastening for the Deliverer. I can't help but think of old Simeon as he held Christ in his arms – “*And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name [was] Simeon; and the same man [was] just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all*

people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”(Lk.2:25-32) Aren’t Phillips words to Nathanael similar to Simeon’s – “*We **have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.***”

Here's the **THIRD THING** these words teach us – All those called by Christ are brought to true faith and true repentance – “*The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, **Follow me.***”(Vs.43) The Greek word translated “*follow*” means ‘to join one as a disciple, become or be his disciple, or side with his party’. We know Phillip immediately became Christ’s disciple, because the **first thing** he did was to go and find his brother Nathanael and encourage him to come and see for himself if this was not the Christ of God promised and prophesied of in the Scripture. There was no hesitancy, no thought of not following, because when Christ calls His sheep, **THEY COME** to Him – “*Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they **FOLLOW** me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand.*”(Jn.10:24-28) Christ used that same word “**FOLLOW**”, meaning all those He calls **BECOME HIS DISCIPLES**. Again, **Jn.6:37** – “*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*”; “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*”(Jn.6:44)

Here's the **FOURTH THING** we learn from these words – The **CONFESSION** of all those called of God and born by the Spirit of God – “*Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*” Listen to the Apostle John’s words on this all important aspect of true faith and true repentance – “*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.***”(I Jn.4:2) These words translated “**JESUS CHRIST**” are so significant. The word translated “**JESUS**” means ‘**JEHOVAH is salvation**’. This was the **NAME** Joseph was commanded to name the Son of God – “*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name **JESUS**: for he shall save his people from their sins.*”(Matt.1:21) Turn over to **Acts 4:10-12**. Paul boldly and dogmatically declared: “*For **WHOSOEVER** shall call on the **NAME OF THE LORD**, shall be saved.*”(Rom.10:13) The word translated “*Christ*” means ‘the Anointed, the Son of God, the **MESSIAH**’. This was the confession of every Old Testament saint – “*These all died in faith, not having received **the promises**, but **having seen them** afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*”(Heb.11:13) This was the confession of the father of the faithful, Abraham – “*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*”(Rom.4:3-5) This was Nathanael’s confession, and it is our confession as well – **Quote Acts 13:38,39**.

Here’s the **LAST THING** we learn from these words – Christ declaration of the **STATE** or **STANDING** of all those He represented as their Surety, Savior, Redeemer, and Friend – “*Jesus saw **Nathanael coming to him**, and saith of him, **Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!***” Let me be very brief and direct on Christ’s declaration of Nathanael, “*Behold an **ISRAELITE***

indeed.” There’s **NO DOUBT** Nathanael and his brother were true Israelites by birth. **But that’s not what Christ meant by these words.** When Paul spoke of his thoughts concerning his national citizenship in an unregenerate state, he declared – “*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, [of] the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews.*” (Phil.3:5) Paul wrote: “*Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they [are] not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, [are they] all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*” (Rom.9:6-8) In Rom.2:28,29 Paul made it very plain – “*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither [is that] circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he [is] a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the spirit, [and] not in the letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God.*” The root word of word “*Israelite*” is “*Israel*”, which means ‘Christians, the Israel of God’ – “*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace [be] on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*” (Gal.6:14-16) The word translated “**INDEED**” means ‘of a truth or IN REALITY’. So Christ was declaring of him and all the elect of God, that they are **TRULY** the “*Israel of God*” which He was sent to “*seek and to save*” – “*Tell ye, and bring [them] near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? [who] hath told it from that time? [have] not I the LORD? and [there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; [there is] none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall [one] say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: [even] to him shall [men] come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*” (Isa.45:21-25) As for Christ’s next declaration to Nathanael – “*in whom is no guile*”, we need to let Scripture be our guide in interpreting what He meant. I read a lot of different commentators on these passages this week, and many of them wrote of this statement – “*in whom is no guile*”, that Christ was saying that Nathanael was a sincere, dedicated religious man. Some of them even wrote that his being under the “*fig tree*” was where the religious men went to pray. **Listen to me:** Sincerity and morality isn’t the issues. The word translated “*guile*” means ‘craft, deceit, or subilty’. “*Guile*” would be considered “sin”, and Christ said of Nathanael – “*in whom is NO GUILE*”. Christ certainly wasn’t saying Nathanael or any sinner is **WITHOUT SIN**. Nathanael was a sinner, and as a sinner, he needed a Savior. There has **ONLY BEEN ONE** in history “*without guile*”, and it was **HIM** who declared that Nathanael had no guile or sin **IN HIM**. To me, one passage clears this up – “*Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven, [whose] sin [is] covered. Blessed [is] the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit [there is] no guile.*” (Ps.32:1,2) The Hebrew word translated “*no guile*” means ‘laxness, slackness, slackening, deceit, treachery’. Religious people like to turn God’s **ORDER** around when it comes to mercy and grace. They think that **ONLY THOSE** in whom there is no laxness, slackness, deceit, or treachery will have their transgressions forgiven, their sin covered, and will not have iniquity charged to them. **But God’s order is clear:** Those truly blessed, eternally blessed, are those “[whose] *transgressions* [is] *forgiven*, [whose] *sin* [is] *covered*. *Blessed* [is] *the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*” These **SINNERS**, and these alone are the ones in whom there is “**NO GUILE**”, seeing they are found in Christ, with their sins charged to Him, and the very “*righteousness of God*” imputed to them – **II Cor.5:21**.

IN closing, are you this morning “*an Israelite INDEED, in whom is NO GUILE*”? If you are “**IN CHRIST**”, you are. That’s the **PURPOSE** and **PROMISE** of God to the “*Israel of God.*”