

Title: **“NO GUILF” — NO EXAGGERATION!**

Text: John 1:43-51

Introduction:

In John 1:47 the Lord Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him and says something that demands our attention. The Son of God, who sees all and knows all, he from whom nothing can be hid, before whose eyes all things are naked and opened, — He says of this man Nathanael, “*Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*” That is where I am headed in this message. The title of my message is **“NO GUILF” — NO EXAGGERATION!**

Only four times in Holy Scripture do we read of people being free of guile, here, in Psalm 32:2; 1 Peter 2:22, and in Revelation 14:5.

- In Psalm 32 we are told that the forgiven sinner is one in whose spirit there is no guile.
- In 1 Peter 2:22 the Holy Spirit tells us that our Lord Jesus had no guile.
- And in Revelation 14:5 we are told that those who stand before God in heaven have no guile.

We read in Revelation 21:27 that none can enter that blessed place called heaven who have any guile, but only those whose names were written as perfect and without guile in “*the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*”

(Revelation 21:27) “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Proposition: This is the thing I want to show you in this message: — All who are accepted of God are without guile; and when God declares them without guile, there is no exaggeration in the declaration.

Let’s begin in John 1:43.

¹ Subject: *Christ Calls Philip and Nathanael*
Date: Danville — Sunday Morning — June 22, 2008
 Lantana Grace Church, Crossville, TN (SAT – 06/21/08)
Tape: John #13
Reading: *Revelation 21:1-27*

(John 1:43-51) “The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. (44) Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. (45) 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. (46) And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. (47) Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! (48) Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? (***Take notice of this: Nathanael makes no protest, but seems to recognize immediately that the Lord Jesus truly knew him.***) Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. (49) Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (50) Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. (51) And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Here the Spirit of God tells us about the Lord Jesus calling of two of his early disciples, Philip and Nathanael. Everything in these verses is precious, sweet and instructive. May God the Spirit write their lessons upon our hearts.

“JESUS WOULD”

First, we are told that the Lord Jesus came into Galilee because he would. — “*The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee*” (v. 43). It was his will, resolution, and determination, to return to Galilee. Everything our Lord did was on purpose; and everything he does now is on purpose. It was his will (And his will is his determined, unalterable purpose.), it was his will to come to Galilee, there to begin his ministry and his miracles, **in fulfilment of the Scriptures** (Isaiah 9:1-2).

(Isaiah 9:1-2) “Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her* by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the

nations. (2) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”

It was his will to come to Galilee **because Philip and Nathanael were both in Galilee; and the time had now come when Philip and Andrew must be called.**

Look at verses 43-45. We are told plainly that the Lord Jesus found Philip in verse 43. Then, in verse 45, Philip told Nathanael, “*We have found the Messiah.*” — Which is true? Did the Savior find Philip, or did Philip find him? — Yes! Without question, all who get Christ seek him. Seeking him with all our hearts we find him. Then, finding him, we discover that we began seeking him because he had found us by his grace. Knowing where he was, as the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, looked Philip up, found him out, and called him by his grace. When he was found of the Savior, he found the Savior.

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;
It was not I that found, O Saviour true,
No, I was found of thee.

Thou didst reach forth thy hand and mine enfold;
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea,—
‘Twas not so much that I on thee took hold,
As thou, dear Lord, on me.

I find, I walk, I love, but, O the whole
Of love is but my answer, Lord, to thee;
For thou wert long beforehand with my soul,
Always thou lovedst me.

If we are saved, we are saved by the will of God our Savior; and we gladly acknowledge that to be the case (Romans 9:16; John 15:16).

(Romans 9:16) “So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

(John 15:16) “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Second, we see in the experiences of Philip and Nathanael that, though all God’s elect experience the same saving operations of his grace, our experiences are all somewhat different. **Every saved sinner’s experience of grace is as singular as his finger prints.**

We are told here of a man named Philip being added to the Lord’s disciples. But unlike Andrew and Peter and John, Philip was called directly by Christ himself. He does not appear to have been one of those influenced by the ministry of John the Baptist. Philip was not brought to the Savior by the witness of a faithful and zealous brother or friend. Yet, his faith in Christ was just as true as that of Andrew, Peter and John. They embraced the same Savior, believed the same gospel, served the same Master and reached the same home at last; but each one experienced God’s salvation a little differently.

That fact is very important. It throws light on the history of all God’s people in every age, and of every tongue. There are diversities of operations in the saving of souls. All true Christians are led by one Spirit, washed in one blood, serve one Lord, lean on one Savior, and believe one gospel. All are saved by the same grace, through the same blood, by the same Spirit, and have the same Savior; but all are not converted in the same experience of grace. In conversion, the Holy Spirit acts as a sovereign. He calls every one severally as he will.

A recognition of this would save us much trouble. We must beware of making the experience of other believers the measure of our own; and we must beware of denying another’s grace, because his experience is not the same as ours. — “*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*” That is the only question of importance.

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Third, the Holy Spirit here reminds us that the message of the Old Testament is the same as that of the New — Christ crucified. This is not the old Bible and the new Bible. This is the Bible, the Word of God; and **the message of this Book is one**. It is the gospel of Christ. When Philip described Christ to Nathanael, he said, — “*We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*” (v. 45). — **All the Old Testament speaks of just one “Him.”**

Christ is the sum and substance of the Old Testament. To him **the earliest promises** pointed in the days of Adam, Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To him **every sacrifice** pointed in the ceremonial worship appointed at Mount Sinai. Of him **every high priest** was a type, **every part of the tabernacle** was a shadow, and **every judge** and deliverer of Israel was a picture.

If we read only that which was written by Moses in the books of the law, **the Pentateuch**, we would see the Christ everywhere in the first five Books of the Bible.

- The Seed of the woman, that would break the serpent’s head
- The Seed of Abraham, in whom all nations would be blessed
- Shiloh to whom the gathering of the people would be
- And the great Prophet, like himself, God would raise up among the children of Israel, whom they would obey

Not only is Christ crucified the message of Moses, he is the message of **all the prophets**. — “*We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.*” All the law and all the prophets spoke of him. They wrote of...

- His birth of a virgin
- The place of his birth, Bethlehem
- His sufferings and the glory that should follow
- His resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God
- Many things relating to his person, and office, and work.

They described him plainly as the King of the house of David, who came to be David’s Lord as well as son. He is the Lamb, foretold by Isaiah — the righteous Branch mentioned by Jeremiah — the true Shepherd described by Ezekiel — the Messenger of the Covenant, promised by Malachi — and the

Messiah, who, according to Daniel, was to be cut off, not for himself, but for the people.

If you want to know who those saints of old trusted, just read the Old Testament. **When Philip said to Nathanael**, “*We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write,*” Nathanael knew immediately that Philip was saying, “Nathanael, we have found the Christ!” The Person they all saw afar off, on whom they all fixed their eyes, was one and the same Christ we trust and worship. The Spirit which was in them testified of Christ (1 Peter 1:11).

Do we find it difficult to see Christ in the Old Testament? If we do, the fault is all our own. It is our spiritual blindness and ignorance that is to blame, not the imaginary ambiguity of the Book. The eyes of our understanding need to be enlightened. The veil needs to be taken away. Let us pray, as we open this Book, “O Spirit of God, open this Book to my heart and open my heart to this Book. Take the things of Christ written upon these pages and show them to me.”

(John 5:39) “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

THE NAZARITE

Then, having given this general account of him, **Philip proceeds to name him particularly and affirms that the Christ, the Messiah, is “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”** His name is Jesus, Savior, of Nazareth. This is that One who is the Nazarene. In God’s wise and good providence, our Savior was brought to Nazareth as a baby by Joseph, that he might, in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy be called a Nazarene (Numbers 6). Let me show you something here. Turn to Matthew 2:23.

(Matthew 2:23) “And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Now, let me ask you a question. — Where in the Old Testament is there a prophecy that says “*He shall be called a Nazarene*”? Have you ever tried to find such a prophecy? If you have, I am sure you were perplexed, because there is no such statement in the Old Testament. In fact, the statement is not

found anywhere in the Bible, except in Matthew 2:23. The town of Nazareth was such a small, insignificant place in Zebulun that it is not even mentioned in the Old Testament. **So where did Matthew get this notion that the Old Testament prophesied, “He shall be called a Nazarene”?** — Did he take an oral tradition and call it a prophecy of the Old Testament? — Was he mistaken? — Is this an error found in the Bible? Such questions cannot be considered by one who believes God.

Must we simply say to ourselves — “Well, the fact that I cannot find where it is written in the Old Testament that “*He shall be called a Nazarene*” does not mean a thing. Matthew wrote it by divine inspiration. God the Holy Spirit who inspired this sentence is the same Holy Spirit who inspired the Old Testament writings; and he knows what he wrote better than I do.” That’s a pretty good way to handle the text. In fact, that is exactly the way I have handled it for years.

But the fact that the Spirit of God says it is there means that it is there. I am confident that he has shown me where it is written. Have I gotten your interest? — **This is a prophecy written in bold letters throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”** It is written so plainly in the Old Testament that I am embarrassed by the fact that I have missed it all these years.

Everything regarding the law of the Nazarites, as well as the whole Volume of the Old Testament, declare that he who is the Christ is that One who is pre-eminently the Nazarite, the Separated One. The Jews, contemptuously, called our Redeemer the Nazarite or Nazarene. Spitting on the ground in disgust, his detractors hissed out the name “Nazarene,” as if it were the climax of contempt. Yet, that blessed Nazarene, triumphant and glorious, “*Jesus of Nazareth*,” is that One whose glory is great in salvation! His is the greatest name among men.

Blind Bartimaeus understood perfectly well that the Christ, the Messiah, would be called “*The Nazarene*.” When he heard that it was “*Jesus of Nazareth*” who passed his way in Jericho, his heart was filled with hope of mercy from “*the Son of David*” (Mark 10:46-48). Dishonored by his foes, he is adored among his friends! While others deride him as “a Nazarene,” we adore him as Christ the Nazarene, Jehovah-Jesus, King of kings, and Lord of lords!

This great Savior is the Nazarene (Numbers 6), our mighty, all-glorious Samson! In his death as our Substitute, he destroyed our enemies. In his resurrection, on the third day after his death, he awoke and carried away the gates of the city (bolt, bar, and posts!) unto a high mountain.

The gates Samson carried away, we are told, were ninety feet across. Yet, Samson snatched them out of the ground, carried them on his shoulders up a mountain next to Hebron, some twenty miles! But, by comparison, that was nothing!

Our all-glorious Christ was laid in the sepulchre. It was sealed with a huge stone. Soldiers were appointed to keep watch over the tomb, while all hell trembled. Yet, at the appointed time, he arose from the dead, broke the iron bars of death, hell, and the grave, and ascended up into heaven, and laid claim to **GLORY LAND** as our Representative and Forerunner, declaring himself the victorious, all-glorious Son of God, the Sun of Righteousness arisen with healing under his wings! Under all that weight and burden of our sin, he never even staggered!

SKEPTICISM ANSWERED

Fourth, look at verse 46 and you will see the best reply you can ever give to skepticism.

(John 1:46) “And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.”

Nathanael’s mind was full of doubts about the Savior, of whom Philip spoke. “*Can there any good thing,*” he said, “*come out of Nazareth?*” To Nathanael’s skepticism Philip replied, “Come and see.” You will remember that in verse 39, when he Andrew and John asked him where he dwelt, our Lord Jesus said to tem “*Come and see.*” But there the words are slightly different. Our Savior’s words in verse 39 are emphatic and sure. He said, “Come and you shall see.” Philip’s words to Nathanael, though the same in English are different in Greek. Philip’s words essentially mean, “The only way to see for yourself is to come to him. Come and maybe he will give you eyes to see. But if you refuse to come, you will never see.”

Wiser counsel he could not have given! If Philip reasoned with Nathanael, he could not have made him see. But by urging him to come, to prove the

matter for himself, he showed his entire confidence in the truth of his own assertion, and his willingness to have it tested and proved.

We should never be afraid to deal with people about their souls just as Philip dealt with Nathanael. Indeed, always deal with immortal souls this way. — “*Come and see.*” We have no secrets. We have nothing to conceal. — “*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*” Those who do the most good for immortal souls, are simple believers who say to their friends, “I have found a Savior; come and see him.”

GREATER THINGS

Fifth, in the last verses of this Nathanael saw a great display of Christ’s eternal Godhead, in his great omniscience, a display by which he was convinced that he is indeed the Christ. But our Savior told him that he would see something greater than that (vv. 47-51).

(John 1:47-51) “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! (48) Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. (49) Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (50) Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. (51) And he saith unto him (*singular*), Verily, verily, I say unto you (*plural — all of you*), Hereafter ye (*singular — personally*) shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

This promise is our Lord’s promise to all who believe him. — “*Thou shalt see greater things than these... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*” With those words, our Lord Jesus promises sweet Bethel-visits, like the ladder of Jacob, to all his redeemed. These sweet visits by which he proves himself over and over to our souls are greater things than the mere revelation of divine omniscience and omnipotence. Even the demons have those revelations. But only saved sinners find all the blessings of grace descending from heaven in Christ and realizing that they

descend only because all the demands of God’s law and justice ascended with Christ.

NO GUILF

Now, let me draw your attention to our Savior’s words about this man Nathanael in verse 46.

(John 1:46) “And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.”

Old **John Trapp** wrote, “Here Christ wondereth at his own work of renovation, as wonderful, doubtless, as that of creation.”

First, he tells us that Nathanael was an Israelite indeed. He was not simply one who was a physical descendant of Abraham. — “*For all are not Israel which are of Israel*” (Romans 9:6). Nathanael was an Israelite indeed, one of the “*children of promise*” (Galatians 4:28), one of “*the Israel of God*,” of Abraham’s spiritual seed, one of God’s true Israel, an heir of covenant grace.

That part of the verse is easy. But the *second* thing our Lord Jesus says about Nathanael is the matter of importance. — “*Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile.*”

We are often urged to be without guile. But here our Lord declares of a man, “*Behold no guile!*” How are we to take those words? Guile is hypocrisy, deceit, cunning, craftiness, duplicity, dishonesty. Does our Savior mean for us to understand that Nathanael had no guile?

If we turn to Psalm 32, we discover that a man in whom there is no guile is a man who is forgiven of all sin by the precious, sin-atoning blood of Christ.

(Psalms 32:1-2) “Blessed *is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* (2) Blessed *is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*”

(Romans 4:8) “Blessed *is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*”

Nathanael was a true child of God, a true believer in difficult times. He was one of a very little flock. Like Simeon and Anna, he was living by faith and waiting prayerfully for the promised Redeemer when our Lord began his ministry. He had that which grace alone can give, an honest heart, a heart without guile.

Without question, **pardoned sinners are upright, righteous, and without guile in the course of their lives.** They are not dishonest, hypocritical people. The Lord God declares of all his children that they are “*children that will not lie*” (Isaiah 63:8).

But that cannot be our Lord’s meaning here. He here declares that Nathanael was a man in whom there was “no guile” and asserts that they and only they in whom is no guile are true Israelites. Yet, every heaven-born soul knows the plague of his own heart. All who are taught of God know that they are, by nature, full of guile.

When our Lord declares that Nathanael is without guile and asserts that all who are Israelites indeed have no guile, was he exaggerating, or was he stating the truth? He was stating the truth, pure, absolute truth. **All who trust Christ are Israelites indeed** (Philippians 3:3).

(Philippians 3:3) “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

And all God’s elect are a people in whom there is no guile, no duplicity, no hypocrisy, nothing false! This is not a declaration personal, or personally accomplished holiness. Those who know the plague of their own hearts know better. God’s people are a people with no guile...

- Representatively — We stand guileless before the holy Lord God because we are in Christ, one with Christ.
- Eternally — We have been accepted in Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, from eternity, “*accepted in the Beloved*” (Ephesians 1:3-6).
- In their Record — The Lord God declares that there is no sin, no iniquity, no guile recorded against us in the record books of heaven (Jeremiah 50:20).

- In Spirit — In the new birth God the Holy Spirit creates in the chosen, redeemed sinner a new nature that is truly righteous and holy, a nature that cannot sin (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24; 1 John 3:6-10). That new nature is “*Christ in you*” (Colossians 1:27; 2 Peter 1:4).

Because they are in Christ and Christ is in them every saved sinner is, like Nathanael, an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile! Are you an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile? — Lord, thou knowest all things, you no what no mere man could ever know about me, you know that I have no guile.

Amen.