

John Chapter 1, Third Continued

The rest of chapter one deals with John's witness to a third group of his disciples which is on the third day (see verses 19-28 and 29-34), for the first and second groups regarding Jesus. Consistent with John's humility (verse 27), he focuses the attention of his own disciples onto Jesus (in verse 37).

John 1:35-36 "Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;" "And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"

These disciples here are speaking of John the Baptist's. This proclamation is not the same as in the last verse. Here Jesus is going away from John, and John is telling his disciples "There goes the Lamb of God". As we said before, in the Spirit, John could see Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins.

John 1:37 "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."

The verb "follow" usually means "to follow as a disciple" but it can also have a neutral sense meaning the "following here does not necessarily mean that they became permanent disciples at this time.

The implication may be that they went after Jesus to examine Him more closely because of John's testimony. This event constituted a preliminary exposure of John the Baptist's disciples to Jesus, e.g. (Andrew in 1:40). They eventually dedicated their lives to Him as true disciples and apostles when Jesus called them to permanent service after these events. At this point in the narrative, John the Baptist fades from the scene and the attention focuses upon the ministry of Christ.

These disciples had been John the Baptist's disciples, but on hearing who Jesus is, they stop following John the Baptist and began following Jesus (The Messiah).

John 1:38 "Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?"

Jesus possibly heard their footsteps behind Him and turned to them. Jesus was asking them why they were following Him. Rabbi or Master has to do with a teacher. It is so strange that is who so many people of today believe He was (a great teacher). They ask Him where He lives, because they are drawn to Him and would follow Him.

John 1:39 "He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."

John is reckoning time by the Roman method of the day beginning at midnight. This would make the time about 10.00 a.m. John mentions the precise time most likely to emphasize that he was

the other disciple of John the Baptist who was with Andrew (verse 40). As an eyewitness to these events occurring on 3 successive days, John's first meeting with Jesus was so life changing that he remembered the exact hour when he first met the Lord.

The Scripture is not explicit about where He dwelt. In another Scripture, He says "I have not where to lay my head". It is to no advantage to try to figure out where this is. At any rate, wherever it was, they stayed with Jesus.

John 1:40 "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."

We may assume from this that John (the beloved), was one who wrote this gospel and Andrew the other. John would not have mentioned himself on purpose to keep them from thinking he was conceited. These two liked what they heard and now are Jesus' disciples.

John 1:41 "He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."

Simon is Peter. This is quite a proclamation. After several hundred years of waiting for Messiah, Andrew has found Him. Most brothers would hurry with this news to their brother. Andrew wants Simon saved.

The term "Messiah" is a transliteration of a Hebrew or Aramaic verbal adjective that means "Anointed One." It comes from a verb that means "to anoint" someone as an action involved in consecrating that person to a particular office or function.

While the term at first applied to the king of Israel (The Lord's anointed' (verse 15a and 16:6), the High Priest ("the anointed priest," Lev. 4:3), and, in one passage, the patriarchs ("my anointed ones," Psalm 105:15), the term eventually came to point above all to the prophesied "Coming One" or "Messiah" in His role as prophet, priest and king.

The term "Christ," a Greek word (verbal adjective), that comes from a verb meaning "to anoint", is used in translating the Hebrew term, so that the terms "Messiah" or "Christ" are titles and not personal names of Jesus.

John 1:42 "And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

Perhaps, Simon didn't believe and Andrew took him so he would, or perhaps, Simon was just excited and wanted to see Messiah. The Lord Jesus immediately tells Simon who he is and what his strength in Jesus will be. He says you will be like a rock. His name also is Peter.

This next section introduces the fourth day since the beginning of John the Baptist's witness.

John 1:43 “The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.”

Jesus has now begun to gather the twelve to Him. Just "follow me" is enough to cause Philip to come to Jesus. He will now quickly gather His twelve.

John 1:44 “Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.”

These men were probably previously friends, being from the same town. Bethsaida means fishing house which would be appropriate since they were fishermen. James and John had been fishing acquaintances of Peter and Andrew. This makes it even more probable that the one who was not named was John.

While Mark locates Peter’s house in Capernaum (Mark 1:21 and 29). John relates that he was from Bethsaida. Resolution centers in the fact that Peter (and Andrew), most likely grew up in Bethsaida and later relocated to Capernaum in the same way that Jesus was consistently identified with His hometown of Nazareth, though He lived elsewhere later.

John 1:45 “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.”

Philip wants Nathanael to know too, and finds him to tell him of the Messiah, the Christ. He reminds Nathanael that the Messiah had been promised by Moses and the prophets. Even though Philip believes Jesus is Messiah, he is looking at the flesh side of Jesus, because he says Jesus is the son of Joseph of Nazareth.

“Of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write” is a phrase that encapsulates the stance of John’s whole gospel: Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture.

Nathanael was an early disciple of Jesus and possibly one of the twelve. At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry Philip brought Nathanael to Him. Both were Galileans: Nathanael from Cana, Philip from Bethsaida. Nathanael was skeptical about the Messiah coming from Nazareth, but followed Him.

Nathanael is mentioned only in John’s gospel, but the following evidence supports his identification with Bartholomew: Nathanael is mentioned only in John’s Gospel and Bartholomew is mentioned only in the listing of the Twelve (in Acts 1:13), and the synoptic Gospels (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14).

Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus, and Bartholomew is listed together with Philip. Finally, John associates Nathanael with the Twelve (21:2). It seems at least plausible to identify Nathanael and Bartholomew as the same man.

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

All of them believed before that no prophet would rise up out of Galilee, and this is probably what he is referring to here. They thought Messiah would probably be from Jerusalem. Philip will not take no for an answer and says "Come and see for yourself".

Nathanael was from Cana, another town in Galilee. While Galileans were despised by Judeans, Galileans themselves despised people from Nazareth. In light of (7:52), Nathanael's scorn may have centered in the fact that Nazareth was an insignificant village without seeming prophetic importance. Later, some would contemptuously refer to Christians as the "sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

The Jews would not call the believers Christians, the people of Christ (Messiah). They used other terms like the sect of the Nazarenes. This nickname was derived from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth.

John 1:47 "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

Jesus of course, knows everything about everyone. Nathanael is no exception. To prove to Nathanael who He is, He greets him in this manner.

Jesus' point was that Nathanael's bluntness revealed that he was an Israelite without duplicitous motives who was willing to examine for his self, the claims being made about Jesus. The term reveals an honest, seeking heart.

The reference here may be an allusion to (Genesis 27:35), where Jacob, in contrast to the sincere Nathanael, was known for his trickery. The meaning may be that the employment of trickery characterized not only Jacob but also his descendants. In Jesus' mind, an honest and sincere Israelite had become an exception rather than the rule.

John 1:48 "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."

Nathanael is alarmed because how did Jesus know that he was an Israelite? Nathanael thinks this to be very strange, but wait until he hears the rest of Jesus' answer. Here again, Jesus knows everything all the time, and He knew where Philip found Nathanael.

Nathanael was under the fig tree literally and spiritually. Israel is the fig tree symbolically and that is the teaching Nathanael was under at the time. Of course, literally Philip had found him sitting under the fig tree as well.

This was a favorite place used by the Jews for meditation. Jesus evidently meant a specific time which Nathanael understood. And if Nathanael had been praying concerning the promised Messiah (verse 45), this would explain his remarkable response (in verse 49), where he confesses Jesus' deity and messiahship.

John 1:49 “Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.”

Nathanael suddenly realized it is true, this is Messiah! He calls Him Rabbi (teacher), but quickly adds that Jesus is the Son of God, King of Israel. What an awakening, to be beholding with his very own eyes the promised Messiah. This revelation of Nathanael was similar to the time when Jesus asked the disciples, who He was and Peter said “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God”. This is not a son, but the Son. He says in essence, it is right for you to rule.

Jesus’ display of supernatural knowledge and Phillip’s witness removed Nathanael’s doubts, so John added the witness of Nathanael to this section. The use of “the” with “Son of God” most likely indicates that the expression is to be understood as bearing its full significance (verse 34 and 11:27). For Nathanael, here was One who could not be described merely in human terms.

John 1:50 “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.”

This is probably the understatement of all time. He would see Jesus open blind eyes, make the lame to walk, open deaf ears, feed 5,000 men with five loaves and two little fishes, speak to the sea and have it obey, and even raise Lazarus from the dead. This is such a small thing in comparison. Jesus is pleased that just this made him believe.

John 1:51 “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.”

Verily, verily means it will happen. There is no question about it. A phrase used frequently for emphasizing the importance and truth of the coming statement.

In light of the context of (verse 47), this verse most likely refers to (Genesis 28:12), where Jacob dreamed about a ladder from heaven. Jesus’ point to Nathanael was that just like Jacob experienced supernatural or heaven sent revelation. Nathanael and the other disciples would experience supernatural communication confirming who Jesus was. Moreover, the term “Son of Man” replaced the ladder in Jacob’s dream, signifying that Jesus was the means of access between God and man.

“Son of man” is Jesus favorite self-designation, for it was mostly spoken by Jesus who used it over 80 times. In the New Testament, it refers only to Jesus and appears mostly in the gospels. In the fourth gospel, the expression occurs 13 times and is most commonly associated with the themes of crucifixion and suffering and revelation (6:27, 53), but also with eschatological authority (5:27).

While the term at times may refer merely to a human being or as a substitute for “I” (6:27 and 6:20), it especially takes on an eschatological significance referring to (Dan. 7:13, 14). Where the “Son of Man” or Messiah comes in glory to receive the kingdom from the “Ancient of Days”, i.e. the Father.

John Chapter 1 Third Continued Questions

1. What does John call Jesus in verse 36?
2. Whose disciples are these two men?
3. Who followed Jesus?
4. What did these disciples call Jesus?
5. What does it mean?
6. What question did they ask Jesus?
7. Who was the disciple who was named?
8. Who was his brother?
9. What did Andrew tell his brother about Jesus?
10. Who did Jesus call Simon?
11. What does Cephas mean?
12. Who did Jesus find in Galilee?
13. What did Jesus say to him?
14. What town was he from?
15. Who did Philip go and find?
16. What did he tell him about Jesus?
17. Who does Philip believe Jesus is?
18. What makes us think he was still looking at the flesh?
19. Nathanael said "Can there any good thing come out of _____".
20. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, what did He say to him?
21. How did Jesus add to what He had said to Nathanael in verse 48?
22. Who is the fig tree symbolic of?

23. Nathanael said to Jesus "Rabbi, _____".

24. What were some of the greater things Nathanael would see?

25. He will see heaven open and what happen?