

## **Philip and Nathanael**

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**Text:**

**John 1:43-51,**

**43. The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”**

**44. Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.**

**45. Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”**

**46. “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.**

**47. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”**

**48. “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”**

**49. Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”**

**50. Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.”**

**51. He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”**

**Commentary:**

**John 1:43, The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”**

I. Jesus was now departing from Bethany beyond the Jordan (Bethabara) and was making his way toward Cana in Galilee.

II. Before he left Bethany beyond the Jordan he added two other disciples to his group of followers.

A. Jesus found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”

B. Andrew and John found Jesus. Jesus found Philip.

C. Philip found Nathanael and brought him to Jesus (as we shall see).

D. Of the twelve, only Philip and Andrew had Greek names.

E. This may be the reason that later in Christ’s ministry Greeks sought Jesus through these disciples.

**F. John 12:21, They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.”**

**John 1:44, Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.**

I. Philip was a citizen of Bethsaida, the hometown of Peter, Andrew, James and John as well.

A. Bethsaida means “place of fish.”

B. Bethsaida was one of the ten cities known as the “Decapolis.”

C. Bethsaida was located on the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum.

D. There were two Bethsaidas, one east of the Jordan River (Bethsaida Julius) and one west of the Jordan River known as Bethsaida Galilee.

E. The eastern Bethsaida came under Christ's ire. Matthew 11:21, "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

**John 1:45, Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."**

I. Philip announced to Nathanael:

A. We have found Jesus, the Messiah. This was what Philip was really saying.

B. We have found the one of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth.

C. Jesus was the legal son of Joseph. Through Joseph Jesus was heir to the throne of David.

D. Philip, on his first day as a disciple of Jesus, led Nathanael to the Lord.

II. Nathaniel (the gift of God) is thought to be the disciple Bartholomew.

A. Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention Bartholomew, but not Nathanael.

B. John mentions Nathanael but not Bartholomew.

C. Jewish names beginning with “Bar,” meaning “Son of,” are common in the New Testament; viz., Bartimaeus, Barabbas, Bar-Jesus, Barnabas, Bar-Jonah.

**D. John 21:1, 2, Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.**

E. Nathanael was a citizen of Cana of Galilee, an Israelite indeed; that is, a true spiritual and physical son of Abraham, a man in whom there was no guile.

**John 1:46, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.**

I. Nathanael made frank and honest inquiry about Jesus and voiced a somewhat biased opinion of Jesus in view of his hometown of Nazareth.

A. Nazareth was an obscure place not once mentioned in the Old Testament, not the kind of place the first century Jews would look for the illustrious Messiah.

B. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” had become proverbial.

C. Great servants of God can come from anywhere!

II. Philip said, “Come and see!”

A. Honest investigation leads to belief in Christ as the Savior.

B. Many unbelievers have never looked into Christ's credentials.

**John 1:47, When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false."**

I. Jesus knew Nathanael without ever having before met him.

A. Jesus knows each of us as well, better than we even know ourselves.

B. Nathanael was "an Israelite indeed;" i.e., a true spiritual and physical descendant of Abraham.

C. No guile/deceit was part of Nathanael's character, a sharp contrast with Jacob, the original Israelite, who was conniving, deceitful, and treacherous.

**John 1:48, "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."**

I. Jesus saw/knew Nathaniel when Philip called him as he sat under the fig tree.

**A. Hebrews 4:13, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."**

B. Many would have accepted Jesus' statement without comment, but Nathanael spoke frankly what was on his heart.

**John 1:49, Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”**

I. Nathanael realized the omniscience of Jesus was a proof of his deity.

II. Nathanael declared:

A. Rabbi/Teacher.

B. Very early in the public ministry of Jesus, he was here declared to be the Son of God, the King of Israel.

C. The disciples would have difficulties maintaining their faith until, following the resurrection, there was never again any question regarding their faith in their risen and ascended Lord.

**John 1:50, Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.”**

I. Jesus said Nathanael would see far greater things than his seeing Nathanael under the fig tree when Philip called him before Jesus ever met Nathaniel.

A. Nathanael believed on the basis of meager evidence.

B. Jesus promised far greater evidences of his divinity.

C. The gospels are full of these evidences.

**D. John 21:25, Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.**

**John 1:51, He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”**

I. Jesus promised Nathaniel that he would see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

A. “Verily, verily” is peculiar to the Gospel of John and is always spoken by Jesus.

B. “Verily, verily” means “truly, truly,” “Amen, Amen.”

C. This expression is used 25 times in the Gospel of John.

II. “Angels ascending and descending” is a reference to Jacob.

**A. Genesis 28:12, “He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”**

III. The expression “Son of man” would be less offensive to the Pharisees and Sadducees, enemies waiting to strike, than “Son of God.”

A. At the opportune time Jesus would, having miraculously proved his deity, present himself as the Son of God.

IV. “Son of Man” was used 40 times by Jesus, 12 in the Gospel of John, and one time by Stephen (**Acts 7:56, Behold, I see the heavens open, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.**)

A. Jesus presented himself as Son of God and Son of man, as truly God and truly man!

**B. This is a great mystery, believed by the faithful of all ages!**

## Philip and Nathanael

### Questions

1. Jesus, after deciding to leave for \_\_\_\_\_, found \_\_\_\_\_ and told him, “\_\_\_\_\_.”
2. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were from the town of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Philip found \_\_\_\_\_ who was also called \_\_\_\_\_ and told him, “We have found the one \_\_\_\_\_ wrote about in the \_\_\_\_\_, and about whom the \_\_\_\_\_ also wrote - \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.”
4. \_\_\_\_\_ asked, “Can anything good come from \_\_\_\_\_?” Philip replied, “\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.”
5. Jesus described \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_, in whom there is nothing \_\_\_\_\_.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ asked, “How did you know me?” Jesus said, “I saw you while you were still under the \_\_\_\_\_ tree before \_\_\_\_\_ called you.”
7. \_\_\_\_\_ declared, “\_\_\_\_\_, you are the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, you are the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.”

8. Jesus further said, “. . . you shall see \_\_\_\_\_ open, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.”

9. In the scripture for this lesson Jesus is said to be the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

10. Bethsaida means “\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_” and was the home of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

11. Jewish names beginning with “Bar” meaning “Son of” are common in the New Testament and include \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_!

12. Great \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ can come from \_\_\_\_\_.

13. \_\_\_\_\_ leads to \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ as the \_\_\_\_\_.

14. \_\_\_\_\_ believed on the basis of \_\_\_\_\_ . Jesus promised far greater \_\_\_\_\_ of his \_\_\_\_\_.

15. “Verily, verily, “meaning “\_\_\_\_\_,” “\_\_\_\_\_” is an expression peculiar to the writings of \_\_\_\_\_ and is always spoken by \_\_\_\_\_.