

COMMENTARY ON JOHN

LESSON NUMBER 17

“JOHN 1:43 *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.”*John 1:43-46)

JESUS CALLS PHILIP

INTRODUCTION

You will note that the record of Jesus, from His birth to His ascension, relates to the great salvation He came to effect. Doctrinally, His birth had to do with Him humbling Himself. His earthly ministry introduced men to the Divine power that would be employed to bring about redemption. His death had to do with the removal of sin, deliverance from the curse, and reconciliation to God. His resurrection confirmed His triumph over the “*last enemy*,” and the reality of the coming resurrection of all of the dead. His post-resurrection appearances confirmed the superiority of Life, and that the One who died is also the One who is now saving us by His life. The ascension confirmed that His major ministry is being done in heaven, and that heaven is the final gathering place for the great ingathering of all things. Jesus is nowhere presented in a quaint or melancholy way. His entire bodily presence in this world, from His birth to His ascension had to do with a fundamental change in the way men think, speak, and act. The fact that someone had to come from heaven to satisfactorily deal with sin, defeat the devil, triumph over death, and enable God to be righteous in justifying sinners tells us much about the human race. It required a period of four thousand years to fully establish that what was absolutely required by God could not be accomplished by any man during any period – without Law and with Law. It confirmed that sin had to be overcome in every stage of life, from infancy to maturity. It also demonstrated that God is honored most by someone who is discerning, holy, and aggressive. Infants are adorable, young children are precious, the strength of the young man is impressive, and the wisdom of old age is helpful. However, a fully mature life, lived with godly discretion, devout consecration, and an unquestionable commitment to do the will of God, is what brings the greatest delight to God. We know this is the case because of the life of Christ. He confessed, “*I do always those things that please Him*” (John 8:29). Now, in the record of John, Jesus is beginning to demonstrate this in an unparalleled way. He will show us what it means to live unto the Lord, do the will of God, resist the devil, and to walk and please God.

JESUS FIND AND CALLS PHILIP

“JOHN 1:43 *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.”*
Jesus has beginning to gather those whom the Father had given to Him. Now He

will add two more: Philip and Nathaniel.

THE DAY FOLLOWING. The expressions *"the day following"* and *"the next day"* occur eight times in the Gospels. Five of them directly relate to Jesus' ministry. They speak of the consistency of Christ's life. His words, as stated in Luke 13:33 provide the picture: *"Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."* The Lord Jesus lived out the Father's will *"today"* – the present, *"tomorrow"* – the immediate future, and *"the day following"* – the future. His life was, in a sense, one contiguous whole. He did not address life from differing and conflicting perspectives. Everything was filtered through doing the will of, as Jesus stated twenty-two times, *"Him that sent Me."* When the activities of *"the day following"* are lived with a perspective that differs from *"unto the Lord,"* the person has veered from *"the highway of holiness"* (Isa 35:8).

Notice what we have thus far: John the Baptist sees Jesus *"the next day,"* and announces *"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"* (1:29). Again, *"The next day"* John sees Jesus and says, *"Behold the Lamb of God,"* at which time Andrew and another disciple follow Jesus and inquire where He is staying (1:35). Now, that event, *"the day following,"* is when Jesus proceeds to carry out the events of our text. There you have the following being lived out: walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16), walking and pleasing God (1 Thess 4:1), presenting your body a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1), setting ones affection on things above (Col 2:1-2), and much more. Much of the frustration experienced by professing "Christians" occur when they, so to speak, change horses in the middle of the stream. They too often involve themselves in activities that tend to compete with higher objectives, rather than ones in which faith can be exhibited.

JESUS WOULD GO FORTH INTO GALILEE. Other versions read, *"wanted to go to Galilee,"* ^{NKJV} *"purposed to go forth,"* ^{NASB} *"decided to leave for,"* ^{NIV} *"was minded to go forth,"* ^{ASV} *"willed to go forth,"* ^{YLT} and *"desired and decided to."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

This was not desiring, or deciding, or wanting, as men in general do. This was directly related to doing the will of God. As He said elsewhere, *"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work"* (John 4:34). With firmness He declared, *"For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"* (John 6:38).

When Jesus left Nazareth He went to Galilee, in order that it might be fulfilled, *"The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles"* (Matt 4:15). *"Galilee of the Gentiles"* was the portion of Galilee in which Gentiles lived. It was in Galilee that Jesus began His ministry, calling His disciples, and setting the stage for His works. There He did *"most of His mighty works"* (Matt 11:20) – in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum – all cities in Galilee.

Here it states that *"He would go forth into Galilee"* – or desired and decided to go there. This was not a haphazard decision, but one that was in strict accord with the will of the Father, whose will He had come to do. It was deliberate, and was an act of obedience to the will of God. This is the same Jesus into whose fellowship God has called us (1 Cor 1:9). It is the same One who dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:16-17). In our own measure, and as we live by faith and walk in the Spirit, we will make similar choices. For us, the perception generally comes when we perceive the benefit of what we have done. The blessing confirms we were in the will of God. With Jesus, He was cognizant of this before He made the decision.

HE FINDS PHILIP. Other versions read, “*He found Philip,*” ^{NKJV} “*He came across.*” ^{BBE} “*met,*” ^{NJB} “*sought out,*” ^{WILLIAMS} and “*ran across.*” ^{MESSAGE} While there are a variety of uses of the word translated “*findeth,*” it seems to me that the following is the most appropriate translation: “**TO MEET WITH 1A) AFTER SEARCHING, TO FIND A THING SOUGHT,**” ^{THAYER} “**TO FIND AFTER SEARCHING DISCOVER, COME ON,**” ^{FRIBERG} “**BY INTENTIONAL SEARCHING.**” ^{LOUW-NIDA}

Knowing what we do about Jesus, I do not see how anyone could represent Him as merely coming across someone, or running across them. Jesus is always represented as knowing what He was doing (John 6:6). He went places intentionally, not without purpose (Lk 4:43).

In our text, Jesus was gathering those the Father had given Him – and Philip was one of them. He is the fifth listed apostle: Simon, Andrew, James, John, then Philip (Matt 10:-2-4; Lk 6:14).

HE CALLS TO PHILIP TO FOLLOW HIM. He does not say, “I want you to be one of My apostles, but rather says “*Follow Me!*” In the Kingdom of God, **following** precedes any assignment (Matt 4:19; 9:9; 19:21; John 12:26; 21:19). Following Jesus involves being where He is – not Him being where you are! As elementary as that may seem, this is the very point at which multitudes stumble. That is because following Jesus involves the crucifixion of the flesh, or self will.

PHILIP FINDS NATHANAEAL

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 FINDETH NATHANAEAL. John is the only Scriptural writer that mentions Nathanael (John 1:45-49; 21:2). Nathanael was with Peter when he went fishing after Christ’s resurrection (John 21:2). That occasion is described as “*the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples*” (John 21:14), leading me to believe Nathanael was one of the eleven. John is also the only Gospel writer who does not mention the apostle Bartholomew (Matt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14; Acts 1:13). The lists of the apostles found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, also confirm that Thaddaeus and Judas the brother of James are the same.

LISTING OF APOSTLES, LISTED IN THE ORDER FOUND IN MATTHEW

MATTHEW

Simon, who is called Peter
Andrew
James the son of Zebedee
John his brother
Philip
Bartholomew
Thomas
Matthew the publican
James the son of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus
Simon the Canaanite
Judas Iscariot

MARK

Simon he surnamed Peter
Andrew
James the son of Zebedee
John the brother of James
Philip
Bartholomew

Thomas
Matthew
James the son of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus
Simon the Canaanite
Judas Iscariot

LUKE

Simon, (named Peter,)
Andrew his brother
James
John
Philip
Bartholomew
Thomas
Matthew
James the son of Alphaeus
Judas the brother of James
Simon called Zelotes
Judas Iscariot

ACTS 1:13

Peter
Andrew
James
John
Philip
Bartholomew
Thomas
Matthew
James the son of Alphaeus
Judas the brother of James
Simon Zelotes
[Judas Iscariot is dead]

I cannot help but notice the obvious closeness that existed among those who were looking for redemption in Israel – those who had believed the promise of a Deliverer. Andrew and Peter were joined by blood, but they also were joined in expectation. The same was true of Philip and Nathanael.

WE HAVE FOUND HIM. Other versions read, “*found the One,*”^{NIV} “*We have made a discovery!*”^{BBE} “*found the man,*”^{GWN} “*found the very person,*”^{NLT} and “*found the Messiah!--the very person.*”^{LIVING}

Philip speaks of a group of believers – “*we.*” They were obviously part of the true Israel that was within the national “*Israel*” (Rom 9:6). This generation still exists – real believers among those who claim to be believers. They are distinguished from the other people – like those within Israel who “*sigh and that cry for all the abominations*” that were done in the midst of Israel (Ezek 9:4). These are “*the remnant*” that remain, even during the dark and foreboding times of apostasy and retrogression. They cannot blend well with others, and so, in a sense, are separate from the nominal and pretentious. Like those of Malachi’s day, they “*speak often one to another*” about the precious things of God (Mal 3:16). They know how to find each other when they have uncovered something of real value – like Andrew finding Peter, and Philip finding Nathanael.

Like Philip, these people are also conversant with the promises of God. In our text, both Philip and Nathanael knew about the writings of Moses and the prophets – writings that pertained to the coming Messiah. Upon hearing Jesus, they were able to associate Jesus of Nazareth with those writings.

It might surprise you how very little professing Christians of our day know about what the Scriptures have said about Jesus. For the most part, they are only acquainted

with *"another Jesus"* (2 Cor 11:4), who has been invented and proclaimed by those who are neither in fellowship with Christ, or His body, which is the church. Today, there is so much religious fable in the professing church that it boggles the mind. There are countless professing Christians who rarely, if ever hear a single clear and concise statement about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. They would see little in Philip's words to charge their spirits.

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE SON OF JOSEPH. They knew the name of Jesus, and they knew where He was raised. But their understanding had to be matured. They thought Jesus was *"the son of Joseph."* This was a supposition, for it is written of Jesus, *"being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph"* (Lk 3:23). Mary and Joseph knew this was not the case, and probably Zacharias and Elizabeth. However, this was by no means common knowledge at this point, even though Isaiah prophesied, *"a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel"* (Isa 7:14). Yet, at this time, that saying was hidden from the people. Jesus was truly of *"the seed of David"* (John 7:42) – but it was on Eve's side, not Adam's.

COME AND SEE

"⁴⁶ And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."

Nathanael does not embrace the testimony of Philip without testing it. He is looking for the Messiah, but he is not gullible. We will find him to be a very deliberate thinker, and able to process truth quickly.

CAN ANY GOOD THING COME OUT OF NAZARETH? Other versions read, *"Can anything good come from there?"*^{NIV} *"Is it possible for any good to come out of Nazareth?"*^{BBE} *"Can anything good come from that place?"*^{NJB} *"Out of Nazareth is any good thing able to be?"*^{YLT}

There is no mentioning of Nazareth in Moses and the Prophets. All that we know about this city is in the Gospels. *"Jesus of Nazareth"* is mentioned seven times in Acts, but nothing is said of the city itself anywhere other than the Gospels. The phrase *"Jesus of Nazareth"* is used seventeen times in Scripture.

Gabriel the angel was sent to Nazareth to Mary, to announce the conception of Jesus (Lk 1:26). Joseph went up from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be taxed (Lk 2:4). Nazareth is called Joseph and Mary's *"own city"* (Lk 2:39). . This is where Joseph, Mary, and Jesus dwelt following the death of Herod (Matt 2:23). It is where Jesus was raised until He was thirty (Lk 2:1; 4:16). Jesus came from Nazareth to be baptized by John (Mk 1:9). When Jesus began His ministry, He left Nazareth going to Capernaum (Matt 4:13). Jesus preached His first public sermon in Nazareth (Lk 4:16). During His ministry, Jesus was known as *"Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee"* (Matt 21:11). The demons knew Jesus as *"Jesus of Nazareth"* (Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34). 12 times in the Gospels He is referred to as *"Jesus of Nazareth."* When He was crucified, the sign over Him read, *"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS"* (John 19:19).

Nazareth was in Galilee, and that entire region was noted for being uncultured, as is evidenced by the response of the Jews on the day of Pentecost: *"And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?"* (Acts 2:7). Jesus Himself was known as a *"Galilaeen"* (Lk 23:6). They evidently also had a particular manner of speaking (probably in accent as well as vocabulary), that identified them – as Peter's speech, on the eve of Jesus' trial before

Caiaphas betrayed him as being from Galilee (Matt 26:57; Mk 14:70).

Even though there is no reference to Nazareth being a citadel of immorality, like Sodom, it is evident from Nathanael's response that it did not have a good reputation in the minds of godly people. I think, however, that the overriding consideration of Nathanael was that the promised Messiah was prophesied to *"come forth"* from Bethlehem, not Nazareth (Mic 5:2). However, the reference *"Jesus of Nazareth"* applied particularly to how He was known during His upbringing and ministry.

This is yet another confirmation that the thoughts and ways of God are not those of men (Isa 55:8-9). In other words, were it not for the revelation of God (as with Simon Peter in Matthew 16:15-18), men could not have concluded that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah. As Isaiah said, *"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him"* (Isa 53:2). Among other things, this should lead us to the conclusion that we should not engage in efforts to make Jesus *"relevant"* to the people. His relevance is determined by what God has revealed about Him, not what men think about Him. This, of course, was the reason for the ministry of John the Baptist, as opposed to Jesus entering the world and people deciding upon the basis of what He said or did, that He was the Christ. It must be remembered that the two contacts made to this point were by those who had been subjected to John's ministry, and followed him.

COME AND SEE. Other versions read, *"Come and see for yourself,"* ^{NLT} and *"You come and see."* ^{PHILLIPS} Eventually, when it comes to the Lord, the individual has to *"come and see"* for themselves. The Psalmist said, *"Come and see the works of God"* (Psa 66:5). When John's two disciples asked Jesus where He was staying, He replied, *"Come and see"* (John 1:39). That is, eventually you have to be where Jesus is – where He is speaking, and working, and leading. In Hezekiah's day, the people began tithing again, and their offerings came in *"heaps."* It was then that *"when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD, and His people Israel"* (2 Chron 31:6-8). Philip had confidence that if Nathanael would just *"come and see"* Jesus, he would be convinced. He knew the sure effects of beholding the truth as it was embodied in Jesus.

We cannot stress enough the responsibility of maintaining an environment where the Lord is evident. This is seen in the hunger and thirst of the people, their unquestionable devotion to the Lord, and their understanding of the things of God. These are all the result of the working of the Lord – like seeing a former lame man leaping and praising God in the Temple courts. When the disciples witnessed the zeal of Jesus, it reminded them of what the Scriptures had said (John 2:13-17). When the things Jesus is said to do are found in is, they testify to the realities of Himself and His great salvation. This also has a ministry to us, so that it can be said, *"Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord"* (John 20:20).