

Series: Disciples of Christ

# NATHANAEL OR BARTHOLOMEW

## JOHN 1:43-51

Text:

Introduction:

The only mention of Nathanael in the Scriptures other than this passage is the listing of the apostles found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, except for a mention in John 21:2 in which he is said to be one of the disciples who was with Peter when they went fishing.

Note:

### **1. THE PROPOSAL**

Jesus makes a proposal to Philip: “Follow me.” He was from the same town as Andrew and Peter. It was a simple and direct proposal.

There was no effort to try to convince Philip to follow.

There is no record of Philip’s response. He doesn’t pursue additional questions. From the scripture we can discern that he did in fact follow Jesus. He goes to find his friend Nathanael.

Jesus offers the same proposal to us: “Follow me.”

Note not only “The Proposal” but also:

## **2. THE PERCEPTION**

Philip’s decision to follow the Lord was based on his perception and belief that Jesus was the Messiah. He tells his buddy, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

His perception drove him to tell his friend.

He went looking for his friend after he had his encounter with Jesus. The simple proposal of Jesus to follow him prompted Philip to seek out others who would want to follow Jesus.

Do we have the right perception of who the Lord truly is?

Too many today have made Christ:

- A therapist instead of the Saviour
- A politician rather than the Saviour
- A solution for success rather than the Saviour

- A master motivator rather than the Saviour

Our perception of the Saviour will determine what we believe regarding the Saviour.

Philip's faith in Christ was proven by his efforts to tell others about him.

Our faith in Christ is demonstrated by willingness to share it with others.

Through Philip's actions, the band of disciples was made larger.

Note not only "The Proposal" and "The Perception" but also:

### **3. THE PREJUDICE (VS. 46)**

Nathanael displayed a certain degree of prejudice when he says:

#### ***John 1:46***

<sup>46</sup> *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

No one is sure what the extent of the prejudice was. It could have been contempt for Nazareth.

It could have been from the fact that Nazareth was nothing special. It was a very mediocre town.

Notice that Philip didn't argue or debate with him, he didn't try to persuade him. He simply said, "Come and see."

Wm. Barclay wrote, "Not very many people have ever been argued into Christianity. Often our arguments do more harm than good. The only way to convince a man of the supremacy of Christ is to confront him with Christ."

We shouldn't try to convince people to follow the Lord through reasoned debate.

We shouldn't try to argue people into faith. Show them Jesus in your life.

Nathanael doesn't allow his prejudice to cloud his vision. He goes to see the Lord.

Note not only "The Proposal" and "The Perception" and "The Prejudice" but also:

## **4. THE PRONOUNCEMENT**

The Lord makes two pronouncements regarding Nathanael.

Notice:

**John 1:47-48**

<sup>47</sup> *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*

<sup>48</sup> *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.*

- An Israelite in whom is no guile.
- When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee

These pronouncements are very telling.

**Psalm 32:2**

<sup>2</sup> *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

I wonder if the Lord would say that of us.

The fig tree was a refuge for people.

The fig tree was a place of prayer and meditation. It is what we would call a prayer closet.

I wonder if the Lord would see us there.

Note not only “The Proposal” and “The Perception” and “The Prejudice” and “The Pronouncements” but also:

## **5. THE PROCLAMATION (VS. 49)**

### ***John 1:49***

*<sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*

All of his prejudices were wiped out at this instant. He didn't totally understand everything about Jesus at the beginning.

Our acknowledgement of him as the Son of God is the beginning of our journey in our relationship with him.

While Philip wasn't able to convince him about Jesus, Nathanael believed when he met Jesus face-to-face.

Note not only “The Proposal” and “The Perception” and “The Prejudice” and “The Pronouncements” and “The Proclamation” but lastly:

## 6. THE PROMISE (VSS. 50-51)

### **John 1:50-51**

<sup>50</sup> *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.* <sup>51</sup> *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.*

Close:

The Lord makes a simple proposal – “Follow me.”

He promises us that we will see great things. Where are you when it comes to your faith in Jesus?