

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN I.43-51



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 1.43-51
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Introduction to *John 1.43-51*

John ends chapter 1, the overture to the gospel symphony which will follow, by putting flesh onto what he wrote at the beginning of the chapter. The Word become flesh is Jesus of Nazareth – Light of Life, Teacher, Son of God, Son of Man, Lamb of God, King of Israel. This is Good News!

In the closing vignettes of this chapter John asserts the mystery and majesty of Jesus, and establishes disciple-making themes which he will elaborate throughout the rest of his story. It is very important, for understanding the Gospel of John, that we pay close attention to this first chapter, and let it sink into our souls.

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1 He Calls

Read and meditate on John 1.43, 44.

John records the calling of Philip. We note that, with respect to the calling of these early disciples, John's account differs somewhat from those of Matthew (Matt. 4.15-22), Mark (Mk. 1.16-20), and Luke (Lk. 5.1-11). This is no cause for alarm. None of the evangelists tells the complete story, and their accounts can be easily harmonized. The focus on Philip is important to John because, as we shall see, it illustrates one of his basic themes (cf. Jn. 20.21).

⁴³*Then Jesus, on the following day,
for Galilee departed. On the way,
He summoned Philip, saying, "Follow Me."
⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, for he
was from the city where both Andrew and
his brother, Peter, lived.*

- John 1.43, 44

Reflect

1. As Jesus begins to move into His public ministry, His priorities are clear: Find and make disciples. Making disciples is the overarching purpose of Jesus' mission; preaching is but one means to that end. How does this compare with what we see in church leaders today? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I want to encourage my pastor in disciple-making. Show me...*

2. Galilee, it is clear, will be a primary recruiting-ground for the first disciples of the Lord. Why do you suppose this was so? Shouldn't Jesus have sought out some theologians, or at least priests, to follow Him? Why rustics, like these Galileans? *Lord, I don't know what You see in me, but I'm grateful You have called me. Today, help me to grow as a disciple by...*

3. John notes that Jesus *found* Philip. Philip didn't come to Him. They didn't just bump into one another on the road to Galilee. Jesus *sought* Philip, as He told Zacchaeus He had come to do (Lk. 19.10). What does it mean for you to *seek* the people in your Personal Mission Field, for making disciples? *Today, Lord, I want to pray for...*

4. How would Philip have understood Jesus' command, "Follow Me"? What did Jesus intend? Do you think Philip understood *all* that this would entail? What *did* He understand? If we want to realize the *full scope* of what it means to follow Jesus, we must make sure we're clear about *every next step*. Explain. *What next steps can I take today, Lord, to seek people for discipleship?*

5. Go, seek, find, engage, call, lead: The call of Philip shows us Jesus' disciple-making method in a nutshell. Apply this method to your own calling to make disciples as you are going (Matt. 28.18-20). Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

"Having then taken [Peter and the other disciple], Jesus next goes to the capture of the others and draws to him Philip and Nathanael. Now in the case of Nathanael this was not so amazing because

the fame of Jesus had gone all over Syria. But it is truly remarkable concerning Peter, James and Philip, that they believed not only before the miracles, but that they did so being from Galilee, out of which 'arises no prophet,' nor 'can any good thing come.' The Galileans were somehow of a more boorish and dull disposition than others. But even in this Christ displayed his power. He selected his choicest disciples from a land that bore no fruit." *John Chrysostom (ca. 354-407 AD)*

The Gospel of John is chock full of mini-stories that encode principles of faith and life we do well to analyze, reduce, apply, and adopt. What's the most important lesson for you from the story of the calling of Philip?

Closing Prayer

Show me Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You *are* the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.

Psalm 25.4, 5

Psalm 25.4, 5, 8, 9 ([*Festal Song: Revive Thy Work, O Lord*](#))
Make me to know Your way; teach me Your paths, O Lord!
My Savior, all day long I wait and seek You in Your Word.

Upright and good are You, You lead us in Your way;
The humble You instruct in truth and guide him day by day.

2 He Moves

Read and meditate on John 1.45, 46.

Found, found, found! That word excited the apostle John. Generations of faithful Israelites had been waiting for the “Consolation of Israel.” Now they had *found* Him! As John emphasized this verb in the story of Andrew and Peter, so he does again here. Philip was so *moved* by Jesus, that he ran to tell his friend. It’s exciting to *find* people who *find* Jesus through you.

⁴⁵Then Philip ran and found Nathanael, saying, “We have found Him, of whom ancient holy words abound in all the Law of Moses, also from the prophets – Jesus, son of Joseph, come from Nazareth.”⁴⁶And Nathanael said, “Can from that lowly city any good come?” “Come and see,” said Philip.

- John 1.45, 46

Reflect

1. Philip and Nathanael must have been friends. Philip was excited to have *been found*, so he spared no time in *finding* his friend with the Good News. How can we keep that enthusiasm and joy alive for *seeking* the people in our Personal Mission Fields? Complete this prayer: *Lord, find me today, all over again. Come meet with me, and show Yourself to me afresh, so that...*
2. What does it suggest about Nathanael that Philip leads off his message with a reference to the Old Testament Scriptures? Is this necessarily the way to begin *every* Gospel presentation? Explain. *Lord, give me wisdom to...*
3. But suppose someone did ask you for some references to Jesus in the Old Testament. Where would you turn? Why is it important to show that Jesus was foretold in the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament? *Give me one Old Testament witness to Jesus to meditate on today Lord, and I’ll share it with...*
4. Philip’s mention of Joseph suggests that he and Nathanael may have known him, or at least, known who he was (he seems to have died by now, see on John 2). Jesus, it appears, has a solid provenance in Nazareth. Wait a minute: The Messiah is from a hick town? Where’s the glitz and glamor in that? Nazareth was not a *good* place. The Messiah, everybody knew, would be *good*. In what ways? Keeping in mind Genesis 1 and Psalm 27.13, what would that word *good* have suggested to faithful Israelites? How do you experience this *good* news? *Lord, teach me to know Your goodness. Help me seek Your goodness in my life and...*
5. We note that Philip didn’t try to argue Nathanael out of his skepticism. He simply said, “Come and see.” How would you encourage someone to “come and see” Jesus today? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Come and see,’ [Philip] says. Sight will suffice for faith. All you need to do is talk with him, and you will be all the more ready to confess and say without hesitation that he is indeed the expected One. But we must also believe that there was a divine and ineffable grace flowing from the words of our Savior that proved alluring for the souls of his hearers. . . . For since his word is mighty in power, it is also efficacious to persuade.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

If people are to *see* Jesus today, it will be first in us, then second, in the Word of God. If the Word of God is in us and growing, Jesus Who is the theme of that Word will show through us to others, and we will know where to point them in Scripture to see Him more clearly. This is what it means to be a witness for Christ, like John the Baptist was – by life and by words. In what ways are you seeking to show Jesus to the people in your Personal Mission Field?

Closing Prayer

His name shall endure forever;
His name shall continue as long as the sun.
And men shall be blessed in Him;
All nations shall call Him blessed.
Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel,
Who only does wondrous things!
And blessed be His glorious name forever!
And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.
Amen and Amen.

Psalm 72.17-19

Psalm 72.15-20 ([*Martyrdom: Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?*](#))

Let Christ be praise, and all the gold of Sheba be His right;
Let blessings to His Name be told, and prayers made both day and night.

And let the earth abound with grain, let fields His fame proclaim;
And may our King forever reign, and nations bless His great Name.

Now bless the God of Israel, Who wondrous works performs.
And bless His Name, His glory tell both now and forevermore.

3 He Knows

Read and meditate on John 1.47.

We are so familiar with these short passages of Scripture that we can miss the enormous significance packed into them. Jesus sees Nathanael coming, and He *knows* him – but not because He knew him previously.

⁴⁷So he went to see.

And Jesus saw him as he came, and He declared, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile, and no deceit.”

- John 1.47

Reflect

1. To his credit, Nathanael went to see. Philip’s mention of the Law and Prophets got Nathanael’s attention. He didn’t need further explanation. He just went. What are some things that the Lord might use to get people moving toward Jesus today? What are some obstacles that can hinder their coming? Complete this prayer: *Lord, is there anything in my life that...*
2. “Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him.” What do you suppose Jesus was feeling as He saw this, here at the very inception of His ministry? Does it delight Jesus for people to come to Him? Explain. *Help me, Lord, to share in the delight You experience when...*
3. Jesus’ statement about Nathanael was not made in private. He calls all who are within earshot to hear what He says. It’s likely that Peter, James, John, and Andrew also knew Nathanael. How would Jesus’ witness about Nathanael have affected them? What might they have been thinking? *Lord, You know all things. You know me. You know that today...*
4. We note that Jesus’ assessment of Nathanael was quite positive. He was guileless and true. But he was lost nonetheless. Is it possible for lost people to be decent, loving, good, and true in many ways? How does Jesus’ comment about Nathanael counsel us in getting to know the lost people in our Personal Mission Fields? *Lord, help me to appreciate all that is good about...*
5. Jesus *knew* Nathanael, but not because He’d known him previously (as we shall see in Nathanael’s response). How was Jesus able to know him? Meditate on Psalm 139.1-6 as you think about your answer. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“He praises and approves the man because he had said, ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ And yet, shouldn’t have Jesus rather found fault in him? Surely not; for the words are not those of an unbeliever or one deserving blame, but praise. How can you say that? Because Nathanael had considered the writings of the prophets more than Philip. For he had heard from the Scriptures that Christ must come from Bethlehem, and from the village in which David was. This belief at least prevailed among the Jews, and the prophet had proclaimed it of old. ... And so when he heard that Jesus was ‘from Nazareth,’ he was confounded and doubted, not finding the announcement of

Philip to agree with the prediction of the prophet.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Jesus knows us. He knows whether we are eager to know Him, willing to serve Him, and faithful to seek Him in His Word. He knows us, just like He knew Nathanael, and just like the Lord knew Job, and testified of him in the heavenly court. Today, what would you like for Jesus to say about you to that great cloud of witnesses assembled around His throne?

Closing Prayer

O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.
You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thought afar off.
You comprehend my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.
For *there is* not a word on my tongue,
But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
You have hedged me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.
Such knowledge *is* too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot *attain* it.

Psalm 139.1-6

Psalm 139.1-5 ([Ripley: Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul](#))

You have searched me, Lord, and known me, when I sit and when I rise;
From afar, my thoughts discerning, all my path before You lies.
Every word, before it's spoken, You behold and know it well.
Both behind me and before me, Your sweet presence I can tell.

4 He Sees

Read and meditate on John 1.48.

Nathanael is taken aback by Jesus' remark. We note that he doesn't deny it. He is guileless, and he probably knows it. But he wants to know *how* Jesus knows this. He'll have to get used to disappointment.

⁴⁸Nathanael said, "How do You know me?" He replied, "I saw you underneath the tree, the fig tree, where you sat when Philip called you."

- John 1.48

Reflect

1. Nathanael is so like us! We have to know *how* mysteries can be true! What is it about us that we, in the presence of mystery, ask *how* rather than skip the desire for rational explanations and go right to wonder and worship? Complete this prayer: *Lord, though I might like to know how about a great many things, teach me that You are...*

2. Nathanael does not address Jesus, whether by name or title. He will in a bit. First, he wants an answer to his question. But that answer will not be forthcoming (recall God's response to Job). Coming to know Jesus as Teacher, Son of God, and King of Israel involves a process. Some people travel it quickly, like Nathanael. Others require a bit more time. What about the people in your Personal Mission Field? Where are they in the process of coming to know Jesus? *Lord, help me to get to know the people You've sent me to so that...*

3. How would you categorize Jesus' answer to Nathanael? Was He being merely coy? Flip? Evasive? Of course not. What then? What was Jesus *saying* by answering Nathanael this way? Does He ever answer your requests like this? Explain. *Lord, help me to know how to discern Your answers when...*

4. Do you ever wonder what Nathanael was *doing* under that fig tree? Augustine will offer a suggestion, and I believe it has merit (see on). But let's consider that fig tree: Low tree, big broad leaves against the hot sun, luscious fruit ready to hand. Maybe a good place for mid-day prayer and meditation? Could Nathanael have been meditating on Genesis 28.10ff? *Lord, when you see me "under the fig tree" what do You see in my mind?*

5. Here is yet another important theme in John's gospel: knowing. Jesus knows all men (Jn. 2.24), and He wants all men to know Him (Jn. 17.3). From what we see in the exchange between Jesus and Nathanael, what does it mean to say that God *knows* us? What's involved in our knowing Him? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

"You know from what the first sinners, Adam and Eve, made themselves aprons. When they had sinned, they made themselves aprons from fig leaves and covered their shameful parts, because it

was by sinning that they caused themselves to feel shame about them. So if the first sinners made themselves aprons, the couple from whom we derive our origins, in whom we had gotten lost so that he would come to seek and to save what had gotten lost—if they made them out of fig leaves to cover their shameful parts, what else could it mean, ‘When you were under the fig tree I saw you,’ but ‘You would not have come to the cleanser of sin unless he had first seen you in the shadow of sin?’ In order for us to see, we have been seen; in order for us to love, we have been loved.”

Augustine (ca. 354-430 AD)

“In order for us to see, we have been seen; in order for us to love, we have been loved.” What comfort to know that Jesus *sees* us and *knows* us and *welcomes* us, declaring us to be without guile or deceit because we are in Him! How does knowing this affect the way you go out into your Personal Mission Field today?

Closing Prayer

Nevertheless I *am* continually with You;
You hold *me* by my right hand.
You will guide me with Your counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven *but You?*
And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You.
My flesh and my heart fail;
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish;
You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry.
But *it is* good for me to draw near to God;
I have put my trust in the Lord God,
That I may declare all Your works.

Psalm 73.23-28

Psalm 73.21-26 ([*Ellacombe: Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*](#))
When my poor, sad, embittered heart was pierced within by grace,
I saw how beastly was the part I chose before Your face.
But I am ever with You, Lord, You hold me by the hand,
And guide me daily by Your Word; in glory I e’er shall stand.

Then what have I in heav’n above but You, my God and Lord?
And on this earth what shall I love besides You and Your Word?
My flesh and heart shall surely fail, and death my soul release;
Your strength for me will e’er avail, and grant eternal peace.

5 He Wows

Read and meditate on John 1.49.

Nathanael's astonished reply to Jesus is packed with significance for what it means to know, confess, and follow Him.

*⁴⁹Then Nathanael answered, full of awe,
"You, Rabbi, are the Son of God, the King
of Israel!"*

- John 1.49

Reflect

1. Nathanael acknowledges Jesus as "Rabbi" (Teacher). For what was he preparing himself by this admission? What does it mean to "learn from" Jesus (Matt. 11.29)? How can we know when we are "learning" Him (Eph. 4.17-24)? What does learning from Him involve? Complete this prayer: *Lord Jesus, as Your disciple, I am committed to being a learner. Help me every day...*
2. Not only did Nathanael understand Jesus to be his Teacher, but he also recognized Him as the Son of God. Meditate on Psalm 2. This must have been in Nathanael's mind as He made this confession (although, see Theodore's comment in the *Summary*). In what did Nathanael envision himself becoming involved as he confessed Jesus to be the Son of God? *O Lord, Son of God, show me today...*
3. Last, Nathanael confessed Jesus to be the King of Israel. Meditate on Genesis 49.8-11 and Isaiah 9.6, 7. What vision of Kingship would Nathanael likely have seen for Jesus? *Lord, do I have this kind of vision, one that...*
4. Nathanael is clearly astonished at Jesus. But one thing is interesting to note about his response: He does not address Jesus as *Savior*. Is this important? Is this title covered by any of the others? Do we mislead people today when we focus primarily on Jesus as Savior, meanwhile subordinating His roles as Teacher, Son of God, and King of Israel? Explain. *Thank You for saving me, Lord Jesus. Because You are Lord, You...*
5. Using Nathanael's responses to Jesus, construct a brief outline of the Gospel, such as you might use to share with someone in your Personal Mission Field. Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

"Therefore Nathanael, convinced by those deeds, said to him, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the king of Israel,' that is, you are the Messiah who was already announced. The Messiah was certainly expected by them as God to appear before everybody, as a king of Israel, even though they conceived him in a more obscure and material way. It was not possible then that the Jews knew how he was the Son of God or the king of Israel. Evidently also Nathanael did not say he was the Son of God by divine generation but by familiarity, as those people who came to God through his virtue

were called sons of God. It was not possible that Nathanael immediately knew what we see and that the apostles themselves came to know after a long time. Those things that were said to him by the Lord could not be sufficient to demonstrate his other nature.” *Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428 AD)*

It’s possible that Theodore has this right (Chrysostom agreed with him). Still, Philip may well have told Nathanael more than what John records in this passage. He might have reported about the voice from heaven affirming Jesus to be the Son of God, or John the Baptist’s witness to this fact. This would have given Nathanael, a man who seems to have been quite familiar with Scripture, time to mull that point over as he made his way from the fig tree to Jesus. Do you think people in your Personal Mission Field need time to think about Jesus – Who He is, what He promises, what He has done? Explain.

Closing Prayer

Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”
“I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
‘You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’”
Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

Psalm 2.5-12

Psalm 2.7-12 ([*Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!*](#))
Proclaim the message far and wide, that God has exalted the Crucified!
From heav’n He sent us His only Son, Who has for us salvation won!

To Christ, the Lord, be given all who humbly embrace Him and on Him call.
Be wise, be warned: His judgment comes to break the prideful, sinful ones.

Rejoice with fear in Jesus’ grace, and worship before His exalted face!
Beware His anger and judgment grim: How blessed are all who rest in Him!

6 He Promises

Read and meditate on John 1.50, 51.

“You ain’t seen nothin’ yet, Nathanael.” And that was an understatement. Jesus further astonishes Nathanael by entering into his meditation from Genesis 28 and interpreting the central component of Jacob’s vision *as Himself*, adding the title (with all its enormous Daniel 7 overtones) *Son of Man* to His credentials.

⁵⁰Jesus said, “Because this thing I said to you, ‘I saw you beneath the tree,’ do you believe? I tell you, you will see much greater things than these. ⁵¹I say to you, you shall see heaven opened, plain to view, and angels of the Lord ascending and descending on the Son of God and Man.”

- John 1.50, 51

Reflect

1. Nathanael could not have understood all the implications of his confession of Jesus as Teacher, Son of God, and King. But confessing these was a faith-filled good beginning, and Jesus commends it. What is Jesus looking for from us, His disciples, in the way faithful-filled responses? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, day by day help me...*
2. Review Jacob’s dream in Genesis 28.10-22. John the apostle began his gospel by showing the Word of God as the Bridge between eternity and the unseen realm, and time and human beings. Now he ends his first chapter with a reprise on that theme. What is suggested by the idea of angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man? *Lord Jesus, all traffic, all commerce between the seen and unseen worlds passes through You. So today,...*
3. Read and meditate on Daniel 7.13, 14. What was Jesus saying to the already-astonished Nathanael by referring to Himself as “Son of Man”? How did Jesus envision the purpose of His coming to earth? *Lord, give me a vision to match Yours, so that I...*
4. And what about that *Kingdom*? Read Daniel 7.18-27 and Daniel 2.44, 45. How does Jesus want us to think about the Kingdom He came to proclaim, bring near, and *give to His saints*? *Lord Jesus, give me more of Your Kingdom today, so that...*
5. One more thing: Jesus said Nathanael – and by implication, us – would “see heaven open.” Should we take that *literally*? Was Jesus indicating that we might begin to *see* into that unseen realm in ways people had not before? Meditate on Ephesians 1.15-23. How does seeing into unseen things happen? Does this happen with you? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Do you see how he leads him up little by little from the earth and causes him no longer to imagine him as merely a man? For one to whom angels minister and on whom angels ascend and descend, how could he be a man? This is why he said, ‘You shall see greater things than these.’ And to prove this, he introduces the ministry of angels. What he means is something like this: Does this, O Nathanael, seem to you a great matter, and have you for this confessed me to be King of Israel? What then will you say when you see ‘angels ascending and descending on me’? He persuades him by these words to receive him as Lord also of the angels. For on him as on the king’s own son, the royal ministers ascended and descended, once at the season of the crucifixion, again at the time of the resurrection and the ascension, and before this also, when they ‘came and ministered to him.’ They also ascended and descended when they proclaimed the good news of his birth and cried, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,’ when they came to Mary and also when they came to Joseph...” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

There was nothing gradual or reluctant about Jesus’ introduction of Himself to these first disciples. He simply told them the truth, as astonishing as that may have seemed. What should we learn from Jesus about being His witnesses to the people in our Personal Mission Fields?

Closing Prayer

Give the king Your judgments, O God,
And Your righteousness to the king’s Son.
He will judge Your people with righteousness,
And Your poor with justice.
The mountains will bring peace to the people,
And the little hills, by righteousness.
He will bring justice to the poor of the people;
He will save the children of the needy,
And will break in pieces the oppressor.
They shall fear You
As long as the sun and moon endure,
Throughout all generations.
He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing,
Like showers *that* water the earth.
In His days the righteous shall flourish,
And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.
He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.

Psalm 72.1-8

Psalm 72.1-8 (*Martyrdom: Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?*)

O give the King Your judgment, Lord, and righteousness Your Son;
And let Him judge by Your good Word the need of every one.

Let now the mountains ring with peace, the hills in righteousness;
Let justice rise, oppression cease, and all the needy bless.

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Let nations fear You while the sun and moon endure on high;
Refresh, renew us every one, like sweet rain falling from the sky.

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures;
Let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

7 Teacher, Son of God, King

Read and meditate on John 1.43-51.

John the apostle has been building to this dramatic climax throughout the whole of chapter 1. He began with us thinking about heaven coming to earth, and he ends right where he began. Only know, the mysterious Word of God and Light of Life is a *Man* – Jesus!

⁴³Then Jesus, on the following day,
for Galilee departed. On the way,
He summoned Philip, saying, “Follow Me.”
⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, for he
was from the city where both Andrew and
his brother, Peter, lived. ⁴⁵Then Philip ran
and found Nathanael, saying, “We have found
Him, of whom ancient holy words abound
in all the Law of Moses, also from
the prophets – Jesus, son of Joseph, come
from Nazareth.” ⁴⁶And Nathanael said, “Can from
that lowly city any good come?” “Come
and see,” said Philip. ⁴⁷So he went to see.
And Jesus saw him as he came, and He
declared, “Behold, an Israelite indeed,
in whom there is no guile, and no deceit.”
⁴⁸Nathanael said, “How do You know me?” He
replied, “I saw you underneath the tree,
the fig tree, where you sat when Philip called
you.” ⁴⁹Then Nathanael answered, full of awe,
“You, Rabbi, are the Son of God, the King
of Israel!” ⁵⁰Jesus said, “Because this thing
I said to you, ‘I saw you beneath the tree,’
do you believe? I tell you, you will see
much greater things than these. ⁵¹I say to you,
you shall see heaven opened, plain to view,
and angels of the Lord ascending and
descending on the Son of God and Man.”

- John 1.43-51

Reflect

1. With the coming of Jesus, people need to understand that life will never be the same. Something new has come, in the form of Someone eternally old. Nothing, John suggests, can ever be the same. First, recall that Jesus came after a period of 400 years of silence from God, and after a longer period in which God only revealed Himself to a tiny nation. With that in mind, how has the coming of Jesus affected commerce and communication between heaven and earth? Complete this prayer: *Lord, let me see heaven open today, so that I...*

2. Second, the hopes and expectations of all human beings have come to earth in the “Desire of All Nations,” Who is our Lord Jesus Christ (Hag. 2.6-9). How is Jesus the desire of all people? Is He the desire – whether they know it or not – of all the people in your Personal Mission Field? *Lord, how can I show You today to...*

3. Third, Jesus brings *mystery* into human experience: How does He know that about Nathanael? Why do people feel

compelled to follow Him? How can He see us without being present with us? Son of God? Son of Man? King of Israel? Looking at these early disciples, how are we counseled to respond to the mysteries that swirl around the Person and work of Jesus Christ? *Lord, I can't understand it all; however, I can believe and...*

4. Fourth, Jesus makes things happen on earth, and promises *in Himself* a new beginning – the Kingdom! – for human experience. How does John 1 encourage us to think about what it means to follow this King of Israel? What are the implications of this for your daily life? *Lord, You have made me a citizen and appointed me an ambassador in Your Kingdom. For me today this means...*

5. Finally, because this story so far might appear to be altogether *unbelievable*, let's not miss Jesus' declaration: "Amen, amen" ("Most assuredly" NKJV). This is true. This is real. Everything this promises and portends *will* come to pass. Do the Christians you know *live* as if Jesus' coming has changed everything? Do you? Bring your prayers from questions 1-4 together into a single prayer.

Summary

"Sometimes our Savior said 'amen' once, at other times twice, when he wished to confirm what he was saying. This is a Hebrew manner of speaking, revealing that which was taking place, such as that 'you have been found trustworthy' so as to see 'the heavens opened,' and so on. He says that it is possible to see the heavens opened not in a manner open to the senses but only by a mind observing the angels coming to serve Jesus. The word amen is used instead of 'really and truthfully' and is more fitting here." *Ammonius of Alexandria (late 5th-early 6th century AD)*

The overture to the greatest story ever told is now complete. All the instruments are on stage, and each has sounded its voice, some of which are dissonant, and will refuse ever to get in tune or play by the score. The primary themes and motifs have been announced, and the echo of a sweet melody, surrounded by dark and dissonance undertones, lingers in the hall. But the Composer is at the podium, and His baton is raised. Hold on to your seats, and get ready to pick up your own instrument. Summarize the impact on you of John 1 in a single prayer.

Closing Prayer

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples!
Shout to God with the voice of triumph!
For the LORD Most High *is* awesome;
He is a great King over all the earth.
He will subdue the peoples under us,
And the nations under our feet.
He will choose our inheritance for us,
The excellence of Jacob whom He loves.
Selah
God has gone up with a shout,
The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
For God *is* the King of all the earth;
Sing praises with understanding.
God reigns over the nations;
God sits on His holy throne.
The princes of the people have gathered together,
The people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth *belong* to God;
He is greatly exalted.

Psalm 47

Psalm 47.1-4, 9 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

O clap your hands, you peoples all, with joy to God your songs intone!
Shout out to Him, and on Him call, He is the mighty, sovereign One!

High is the Lord, O fear His Name! He rules a King o'er all the earth.

The Gospel of John: John 1.43-51

Nations and peoples He has tamed, the heritage of His holy worth.

Princes of peoples gather all to Abraham and to our God.

Exalt the Lord, and on Him call – the earth is His, so praise our God!

The Gospel of John: John 1.43-51

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. What are we learning thus far about what it means to follow Jesus?
2. How does John want us to think about Jesus? How should this affect the way we explain Jesus to others?
3. We see that Jesus moves people to action. They come to Him and rush from Him to others. They follow Him. He welcomes them. In what ways is it evident that the action of *your* life revolves around Jesus?
4. How does Jesus teach us to think about unseen realities? Reflect on Colossians 1.1-3. How can this begin to be a more consistent part of your walk with and work for the Lord?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 1.43-51? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.