



JOHN 1:43-51 | THE THIRD DAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF JESUS' MINISTRY

- Verses 43-44
 - The fact that Jesus, now desiring to **go forth into Galilee** (His home region), **findeth Philip** is evidence that Philip may actually be the second of the **two disciples** of John (the other being Andrew, v. 40).
 - The verb **findeth** is in the active tense, so Jesus *went searching for Phillip*. This gives indication that they were not strangers.
 - It could be that Jesus knew Philip from Galilee (Bethsaida is a neighboring town to Capernaum, but thus far in Jesus' life He had been in Nazareth, which is a three-day's journey by foot).
 - It is interesting to note that this is the first disciple that Jesus sought out, and also the first to which Jesus gave the command, **Follow me**.
- Verse 45 –
 - Philip is a Greek name, *philos-hippos*, "lover of horses." Nathanael is a Hebrew name meaning "gift of God." The fact that one family uses both Greek and Hebrew names for their sons is evident that, in the New Testament, one cannot determine a person's religious or cultural background by name alone.
 - Nathanael is (it is believed) the same person as Bartholomew (an Aramaic name - "son of Tolmai").
 - Philip was certainly a believer in Jesus as Messiah. The fact that he says to his brother, **We have found him...** gives some indication that Philip and Jesus were not long-time friends (see note on vv. 43-44), but that this discovery is recent.
 - Philip testified that it was his belief that Jesus was the **One of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write**. His identity was **Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph**. Both the Law and the Prophets spoke of the coming Messiah.
- Verse 46 –
 - Nathanael speaks what is likely a common saying or thought in his day, **Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?** This speaks to the reputation of the town, but also speaks to how prophecy was interpreted.
 - The Hebrew *nezer* is "a branch." The name Nazareth is Aramaic is *likely* related to the Hebrew *nezeret* (the feminine form of *nezer*).
 - Matthew connects the two (Matt. 2:23) as a fulfillment of prophecy, but this would not have necessarily been understood in advance.
 - Those like Nathanael certainly saw the name of the town as coincidental to the identity of the Messiah.
- Verse 47 –
 - This wonderful little Scripture tells us the heart of Jesus: *He is interested in honesty, not social acceptability*.
 - Nathanael said what everyone was likely thinking. He said what others would not say.

- Jesus honored his forthrightness and highlighted the rarity of this trait among Israel, a rarity which remains in most “polite societies” today. Jesus would rather hear truth than hear fake niceties.
 - The word **guile** is δόλος [dolos] (deceit). The English word *sedulous* (continuously hard working) comes from this, with the prefix *se* (apart from). Thus a *sedulous* employee is “without deception.”
- Verses 48-49 –
 - Since Nathanael did not know Jesus, it is doubtful that Philip knew Jesus prior to their meeting as potentially one of the two disciples of John.
 - While not a miracle *per se*, this is the first supernatural event in the ministry of Jesus. Nathanael clearly understood that Jesus saw what no man could have seen, and quickly confessed that Jesus was **the Son of God** and **the King of Israel**.
 - The entire Gospel is written, from beginning to end, that the reader might recognize what Nathanael recognized from the beginning.
 - In Nathanael’s confession we see:
 - that the Jews expected a Messiah who would establish a physical kingdom with an earthly reign as **the King of Israel**.
 - that the Jews *did* expect the Messiah to be **the Son of God**.
 - that some recognized Jesus as Messiah from the very beginning of His ministry. Among these were Philip and Nathanael.
- Verse 50 –
 - Jesus expresses an amazement (or amusement) that Nathanael is so easily convinced. His response: *You ain’t seen nothin’ yet!*
- Verse 51 –
 - In verse 51, the grammar tells the story! Many have been perplexed because Nathanael never saw the fulfillment of this prophecy.
 - But, when read closely, the prophecy was not given to Nathanael.
 - Notice that Jesus **saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see**.
 - Simple KJV-usage grammar explains that **him** and **you/ye** are not the same person, and cannot be.
 - Nathanael (**him**) is included with the **ye** but is not the totality of the **ye**.
 - If Jesus was making a prophecy for Nathanael, He would have said, *I say unto thee* rather than *unto you*.
 - Thus we have a promise to the nation that we know from other passages was contingent upon the national repentance preached by John, Jesus, Peter, etc. Such conditions were never met, and the Kingdom (and thus this promise) has been put into abeyance for a future day.
 - It should be noted that there is an amazing fingerprint of God in the Scriptures that shows such consistency that only God can be the author of the whole. Here we have a word about the coming Kingdom, and then there are two days of silence. Though it was hidden in God at this time, the establishment of the Kingdom will not come (we now know) until after a period of silence.