



The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

Part 3

Introduction

Teachers in the ancient era had close companions, what the Bible calls disciples. A disciple is simply a follower or student of a teacher, leader, or philosopher. Socrates, the Pharisees, the rabbis, and John the Baptist had disciples.

Differences between typical disciples and disciples of Jesus:

- It was the responsibility of the student to find a teacher. What we see in this passage, and throughout the New Testament, is Jesus finds and calls his followers.
- Jesus' disciples were committed to him, not just his teaching. Jesus seeks allegiance to himself, not a cause.
- The purpose of learning was to become a rabbi. The purpose of learning for Jesus' disciples is to testify of him.

For all the formal similarities, there is no inner relation between the students of the rabbis and the disciples of Jesus. Jesus is kyrios (Lord), not rabbi. Witness to Jesus rather than transmission of his teachings or imitation of his life is the primary task of the disciples.¹

This section gives insight into the *first calling* of the first disciples. There were multiple calls.

- John 1:35-51
- Matt 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20
- Luke 5:1-11
- Matt 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32
- Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16

We are most familiar with Matt 4:18-22.

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

What we are looking at today occurs about a year before the call in Matthew 4. This is their introduction to Jesus.

I. The calling of Andrew, Peter, and John

1. Disciples of John the Baptist become disciples of Jesus.
 - a. Andrew and, most likely, John follow Jesus.

¹ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company



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- b. Jesus asks, "What are you seeking?" Their answer, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" does not mean they simply wanted to know where Jesus lived. What they wanted was time alone with Jesus.
- c. Tenth hour - either 10am or 4pm
2. Andrew brings Peter
 - a. Claims to have found the Messiah. Messiah and Christ both mean, "Anointed One." (2 Sam 7:5-16; Ps 110:1-4; Is 9:6-7)
 - b. Jesus look at Peter - studied him intently
 - c. Cephas (Aramaic) and Peter (Greek) mean rock

Matt 16:16-18 - Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
 - d. Change of name indicates change by God.

Gen 17:5 - No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

Abram means, "exalted father." Abraham means, "father of a multitude."

Gen 17:15-16 - And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

Sarai and Sarah mean princess.

Gen 32:28 - Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Jacob means, "He takes by the heel," or "He cheats." Israel means, "He strives with God."

Rev 2:17 - He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.

Rev 3:12 - The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

2 Cor 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

II. The calling of Philip and Nathanael

1. Jesus found Philip.
 - a. Galilee is in the northern part of Israel west of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee.



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- b. Called Philip to follow
2. Philip found Nathanael. Nathanael means “God has given.” Referred to as Bartholomew in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
 - a. Law and prophets - Old Testament Scriptures (Matt 5:17; 7:12; Luke 16:16; 24:44; Acts 13:15; Rom 3:21)
 - Matt 5:17 - Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*
 - Matt 7:12 - So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*
 - Luke 16:16 - The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.*
 - Acts 13:15 - After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.”*
 - Rom 3:21 - But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it.*
 - b. Moses in the Law and also the prophets
 - Luke 24:44 - Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”*
 - Heb 1:1-2 - Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*
 - c. Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph - in the Greek, Nazareth is last
 - d. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? - Could be simply a bad opinion of Nazareth or, more likely, Nathanael is saying that he knows of no prophecy saying that the Messiah will come from Nazareth.

III. Jesus will fulfill Jacob’s dream

1. Behold, an *Israelite* indeed, in whom there is no *deceit*. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. Given the reference to Jacob’s vision in verse 51, this is a contrast with Jacob who was known as the deceiver (Gen 27). Jesus was not making an observation about Nathanael’s external appearance but his internal character.
2. Nathanael’s question, “How do you know me?” indicates that Nathanael realizes the importance of Jesus’ description.
 - a. Jesus has known Nathanael, and all his people, from all eternity.
 - b. Nathanael’s response to Jesus shows that he really wanted to know the truth. Unlike the Pharisees he was not interested in trying to deceive or trap Jesus in his words, but genuinely wanted to learn more about Jesus.
3. Jesus reveals his divinity to Nathanael (Ps 139). Just as God revealed himself to Jacob, Jesus reveals himself to Nathanael.



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4. Son of God, King of Israel - both are designations of the Messiah.

Matt 27:41-43 - So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

2 Sam 7:14 - I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men

Ps 2:7 - I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

Zeph 3:15 - The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

John 12:13 - So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

5. You will see greater things than these - Verse 51 explains

a. Truly, truly - pay attention!

b. You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Both instances of "you" are plural. Refers to Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:10-19a.

i. Jacob sees a bridge between heaven and earth.

ii. The tower of Babel showed that humans want to ascend to heaven. Jacob's dream showed that God comes to us. He plans to dwell with man.

iii. Bethel means, "the house of God."

iv. Jesus is the true bridge between heaven and earth. God comes to us in Jesus. Jesus is the new Bethel.

Matt 1:22-23 - All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

2 Cor 6:16 - What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Eph 2:19-20 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Rev 21:1-3 - Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,



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"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

IV. Application

1. We must bring people to Jesus through the Gospel.
 - a. In verse 42 Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. In verse 46 Philip told Nathanael to "Come and see." Philip did not relate his experience with Jesus but brought Nathanael to Jesus.
 - b. We can't bring people to the physical Jesus but we can bring them to the living Word through the written Word.
 - c. Our experience with Jesus is secondary to the Gospel for the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16). Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom 10:17). Paul told the Corinthians that he only wanted to know Christ and him crucified (1 Cor 2:2).
2. The call of the Gospel is radical abandonment to Jesus.
 - a. Jesus said to Philip, "Follow me" - not "Listen to me," "Watch me," "Imitate me," or "Admire me." We certainly need to do these things but "Follow me" calls for complete abandonment to Christ.

*Matt 10:38 - And whoever does not take his cross and **follow me** is not worthy of me.*
Matt 16:24-25 - Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
Acts 4:13 - Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.
 - b. Radical abandonment to Jesus is a process called sanctification. Just as the disciples had growing commitment to Christ, so we do as well. The Holy Spirit guides our progress in commitment, holiness, and service.

Rom 8:26 - Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.
Heb 6:1-3 - Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.
 - c. The Holy Spirit uses us to encourage each other in faithfulness to Christ.

Heb 10:24-25 - And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.