

“The First Disciples Follow Jesus”

John 1:35-51

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Teaching Aim: To examine the circumstances surrounding the calling of the first disciples of Jesus Christ. To recognize the importance of telling those closest to us about the Savior. To realize Jesus will not turn away anyone who desires to know Him more deeply and intimately. To understand the believer’s commitment to Christ is a total commitment; a commitment for both now and all eternity. To recognize Jesus is the ladder that bridges the gap between heaven and earth (**John 14:6**).

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: The mission of John the Baptist and the message he proclaimed (John 1:29-36)

1. John the Baptist was given the special mission of preparing the way of the Lord. (See **Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 3:1-3**) What special message did John reveal in **John 1:29**? Since John was the cousin of Jesus, do you find it surprising that John did not recognize Him (**vs. 31**)? Have you ever run into someone several years after you knew them and did not recognize them? What are some possible explanations for John’s statement in **verse 31**?

2. What supernatural event occurred at the baptism of Jesus (**vs. 32**)? What surprising statement did John make for a second time in **verse 33**? What sign did God promise John in helping him to identify the Messiah? What testimony did John give following the descending of the Spirit of God at the baptism of Jesus (**vs. 34**)?

3. Who did John have with him on the following day (**vs. 35**)? What profound statement did John make for a second time in **verse 36**? What was the significance of the title, “*Lamb of God?*”

Part II: The calling of the first disciples (John 1:37-42)

1. What did the two disciples do in response to John’s declaration (**vs. 37**)? Would you have done the same? What did Jesus do when He realized the two men were following Him (**vs. 38**)? In essence, Jesus was saying, “*What do you want?*” As you look at your own desire to follow Christ, what is it that you are looking for in this relationship? Honestly, is your desire Christ centered or me centered? Which of the two should it be?

2. What does the word “*Rabbi*” mean? (See Dictionary) What request did the men make of Jesus (**vs. 38b**)? Why do you think the men asked this question? How did Jesus respond to their request (**vs. 39**)? Would you sit at the feet of Jesus if you had the chance to do so? Note: We sit at the feet of Jesus every time we read God’s Word; the Bible.

3. Is there any significance to John sharing the time of day this event occurred (**vs. 39**)? Can you remember times in your own life when something occurred that you cannot forget? Why do these events stand out in your memory?

4. In **verse 40**, we learn the name of another disciple. Who is it? What made this disciple so special? (See **John 1:41; 6:4-9; 12:20-22**) Why do you think more Christians can name the twelve signs of the Zodiac than can name of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ?

5. What is the first thing Andrew did after meeting Jesus (**vs. 41**)? Why? Were you more zealous to tell others about Jesus when you first came to faith in Christ or are you more zealous now? What changed? What are some ways that people can reignite their first love for Jesus?

6. What was the very first thing Jesus said to Simon when he saw him (**vs. 42**)? What is the meaning of the name “*Cephas*?” (See Commentaries) Did Peter live up to this name early in the gospel accounts? When did Peter become a spiritual giant? (See **Acts 2:14-39; Gal. 2:9**)

7. Peter traditionally has received more recognition than his brother Andrew. Why? Since Andrew led Peter to Christ, do you think he will share in Peter’s reward? Who have you led to Christ? Note: Not every Christian has the gift of evangelism, but every Christian is to evangelize. Why is it so important for everyone to share Jesus with others?

Part III: Philip and Nathanael follow Jesus (John 1:43-51)

1. Where did Jesus desire to go on the next day (**vs. 43**)? Whom did He find before He left for Galilee? What did Jesus say to this individual? Are you willing to follow Jesus no matter where He leads you in life?
2. What city was Philip a resident of (**vs. 44**)? Who else was from this city? Where do most people believe the ruins of Bethsaida are located today?
3. Whom did Philip go find before He and Jesus left for Galilee (**vs. 45**)? What other name is possibly used for "*Nathanael*" in the Bible? (See Commentaries) In what two ways did Philip identify Jesus in **verse 45**? What can we learn about Jesus from the following Messianic prophecies? (See **Gen. 3:15; 12:2-3; Deut. 18:18-19; Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; Mic. 5:2 Isai 53:5-6; Psa. 16:9-10**)
4. How did Nathanael react to Philip's declaration that Jesus was the Messiah (**vs. 46**)? Why do you think Nathanael reacted this way? How did Philip respond to Nathanael's comeback? What can we learn about the city of Nazareth from a Bible Dictionary? What important valley in Scripture was this little town located above? Do you think Jesus looked down upon this valley as a child?
5. We learn from **verse 47** that Nathanael did follow Philip in order to meet Jesus. What did Jesus say to Nathanael as soon as he saw him? Why do you think Jesus said this? How does this comment of Jesus to Nathanael contrast with the original meaning of Israel's name, "*Jacob*?" Nathanael did not take things at face value, he wanted to see the evidence firsthand. What can modern Christians learn today from Nathanael's reaction?
6. Nathanael was startled by the insight of Jesus since the two had never met (**vs. 48**). What other demonstration of "*omniscience*" did Jesus provide for Nathanael? Why is this significant? How did the revelation of Jesus affect Nathanael's view of Him (**vs. 49**)? When did you receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? What did God use to draw you to Jesus?

7. Nathanael had probably been sitting under the shade of a fig tree during the heat of the day meditating on an Old Testament Scripture. Nathanael was amazed that Jesus knew where he had been sitting (**vs. 50**). What did Jesus promise Nathanael? What greater things would Nathanael and the other Apostles see?

8. What clue do we find in **verse 51** that the verse Nathanael was meditating on may have been **Gen. 28:12**? **Gen. 28:10-12** says, *“Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”* What is the true meaning of **Gen. 28:12** according to Jesus?

9. Jesus is the connection between heaven and earth. What truth should every person learn from **John 14:6**? What favorite title did Jesus use for Himself in **verse 51**? Jesus used this title 83x in the four Gospels. Was Jesus simply saying, *“I am a man, I am a man, I am a man?”* Or was he teaching the Israelites something far deeper? Is it possible that Jesus was declaring His deity by identifying Himself with the heavenly figure revealed in **Dan. 7:13-14**? If so, why is the use of *“Son of Man”* in **verse 51** so important?

10. If Jesus is the only way to heaven as He claimed, have you received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so right now in prayer?

MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- John the Baptist’s mission was to prepare the way for the coming Messiah.
- Almost every time we see Andrew in Scripture, he is bringing somebody to Christ.
- Not all of us have the gift of evangelism, but every Christian is to evangelize.
- Names in the Bible are often changed to describe something about their new God given role.
- Philip, like Andrew, was an evangelist.
- Nathanael was a true Israelite, and unlike Jacob in his early years, was not deceitful.
- Jesus used the occasion of Nathanael’s newfound faith to explain the true meaning of Jacob’s ladder in **Gen. 28:12**.
- Jesus is the bridge between heaven and earth (See **John 14:6**).