

“Following Jesus”
John 1:35-51

November 22, 2015

- A. Days of Preparation
 - 1. How did day one prepare the Baptist’s disciples for Jesus (1:19-28)?

 - 2. How did day two (1:29-34)?

- B. “From Baptists to Christians” 1:35-39
 - 1. How did these disciples of the Baptist respond to Jesus on day three?

- C. Andrew Brings to Jesus 1:40-42
 - 1. Where did Andrew start his evangelism?

 - 2. Of what was Andrew convinced?

- D. Philip Does Some Inviting 1:43-46
 - 1. On day four, who invited Philip?

 - 2. What kind of person did Philip decide to invite?

- E. Nathanael Accepts Jesus 1:47-51
 - 1. Who convinces Nathanael of the truth?

 - 2. What is the better thing that Nathanael and we later share?

Think of a better title for this message! Note the repeated use of the word ‘find’ in this passage.

A. Days of Preparation

1. Day One 1:19-28
 - a. with verse 19, John begins the account of Jesus’ earthly ministry
 - b. as the end of that ministry climaxes in a one-week period, the Passion week – from the Triumphal entry to the crucifixion and resurrection
 - c. so John gives the beginning in a similar period of about a week
 - (A) this period begins some 6 weeks or so after Jesus’ baptism
 - (B) and after His 40 days of testing in the wilderness
 - (C) it covers the events of 4 successive days, followed by a day of silence and then the wedding in Cana and Jesus first miracle
 - d. these days are a link between the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist and the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry
 - e. the first day records the Baptist’s encounter with the delegation from the religious rulers in Jerusalem
 - (A) this took place where John was baptising on the Jordan river, at a certain Bethabara or Bethany which was reasonably close to Galilee and the towns of Bethsaida, Cana and Nazareth
 - (B) these rulers came to examine the Baptist’s preaching credentials
 - (C) what gave him the right to call for repentance and to baptise Jews as though they were converts to Judaism?
 - (D) so they questioned him to find out who he was
 - f. the Baptist was
 - (A) NOT the Christ – the Messiah – one anointed as deliverer
 - (B) NOT Elijah the prophet returned to the earth in bodily form
 - (C) NOT the Prophet like unto Moses which Moses foretold
 - g. the Baptist was
 - (A) the one foretold by Isaiah
 - (B) the one preparing the way for the Coming One, the Lord
 - (C) of far less importance than the Person he heralded
 - h. and with these words, John the Baptist turned the focus away from himself to the coming Christ – that is the essence of witness

2. Day Two 1:29-34

- a. Jesus is returning to the Baptist after the time in the wilderness
 - (A) the Baptist announces Jesus' Person and mission: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)
 - (B) once more he enlarges on the greatness of this Man, Jesus, and his own unworthiness in comparison – I cannot undo His shoes
 - (C) and the greater work that is Jesus' – not the baptism with water, a sign of repentance; but the baptism with Spirit, a sign of power
- b. how many were present at this event – the re-encounter of Jesus with the Baptist – and heard this testimony is not stated
- c. but the way that the testimony is formally given, however, it is to be taken that the words spoken to a crowd, consisting both of his own disciples and those seeking baptism:
- d. "... this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." (John 1:33-34)
- e. the work of the witness is to tell others who Jesus is

B. "From Baptists to Christians" 1:35-39

1. Day Three – Jesus' First Disciples

- a. 'Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"' (John 1:35-36)
- b. the language through the rest of this chapter, as is frequently the case in this gospel of John is that of an eye-witness
 - (A) the Baptist is standing – the usual position of a teacher with his disciples – and with only two disciples
 - (B) Jesus is walking past and the Baptist gives him a meaningful look – a look that the writer can vividly remember
 - (C) then repeats part of what he has said the day before – Behold! – turn your attention to this man
 - (D) and these two disciples respond to the Baptist's suggestion
- c. 'The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.' (John 1:37)
 - (A) the Baptist has done his work as witness – he has pointed others to Jesus Christ
 - (B) the disciples of the lesser figure now become disciples of the greater
 - (C) and there seems to be no hesitation, no bidding farewell; they have been prepared for this day by the Baptist's message

- (D) before Jesus has gone far, they follow after Him
- (E) here is the first-hand description of their encounter with their new Teacher
- d. 'And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"' (John 1:38)
 - (A) Jesus senses their coming up behind Him, turns, and questions them – not whether they are following Him or not, that He knows – but what is your purpose is coming to me?
 - (1) John was preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sin – is that why you are coming? ... I can forgive sin.
 - (2) John proclaimed the coming of the King – are you seeking to enter that Kingdom? ... I can bring you into that kingdom
 - (B) we want to learn of you – where will you be so that we can come and hear your words; where are you lodging at this time?
 - (C) then comes one of the gentle, gracious invitations of Jesus
- e. 'He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.' (John 1:39)
 - (A) this was abundantly above all that they asked
 - (B) they came, they saw, they stayed – all that day
 - (C) the tenth hour could mean 10 a.m. (Empire Standard Time) or 4 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time), and there are arguments for both. But I am convinced both by the context – the wording used is 'that day' not 'that evening' – and the further events of the day in the next verses – as well as other reasons, that it was 10 a.m.
 - (D) and what a day that must have been for these disciples who had been looking for Messiah, to meet Him and to hear Him speak!

C. Andrew Brings to Jesus 1:40-42

1. Personal Evangelism

- a. 'One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.' (John 1:40)
 - (A) of course Peter did not yet have that name – that would officially be placed upon him after his great confession in Matthew 16:16
 - (B) Andrew was to be known more on account of his outspoken brother – and evidently as he heard Jesus speak his thoughts turned to that brother – to share the Jesus whom he had found
- b. 'He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means

Christ).’ (John 1:41)

- (A) the person who comes and finds Christ wants to share Him
- (B) Andrew, and the rest of the disciples, had yet a lot to learn what that confession, “this is the Messiah”, really meant – only Christ’s death and resurrection and the coming of Holy Spirit would bring that enlightenment – but the first light had dawned in his soul
- c. ‘He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).’ (John 1:42)
 - (A) as the impulsive Simon’s character was changed by God’s grace into the steadfast quality of rock, he became the spokesman for the apostolic band
 - (B) for both Cephas (Aramaic) and Petros (Greek) mean rock
 - (C) what a joy it must have been to Andrew in later years to know that he had brought his brother to the Lord

2. Who Was the Other Disciple?

- a. we do not know but there is a strong opinion that he was the beloved disciple, John
- b. the writer of this book never makes reference to the apostle John, nor to his brother James, except once very indirectly as “the sons of Zebedee” (John 21:2)
- c. there are many indications the writer was an eye-witness, remembering such things as the very hour, the tenth, that they arrived at the place where Jesus was lodged
- d. some Bible students, even see in that word, ‘first’, that John also found his brother, James, but that he was second – in any event, James and John were associated from the very first as Jesus disciples as Mark 1:29 shows.

D. Philip Invites to Jesus 1:43-46

1. Day Four – Disciples Added

- a. ‘43 The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.’ (John 1:43-44)
 - (A) in this instance, Jesus Himself engages in personal evangelism
 - (B) there seems to have been a period of a few months when Jesus started to form a loose assembly of disciples, then at a later date He went forth and rounded them up from their various pursuits to ordain them more formally as the Twelve
 - (C) what was said to Philip, the discussion that took place between himself and Jesus, is not recorded, but must have been impressive
- b. ‘Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets

wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” (John 1:45)

- (A) it was sufficiently impressive that Philip identified Jesus as the fulfilment of the Messianic promises of the OT
 - (B) to Nathaniel he identifies him by his family and home-town
 - (C) but Nathanael is skeptical
- c. ‘Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip *said to him, “Come and see.”’ (John 1:46)
- (A) there were reasons for such skepticism
 - (1) Nazareth was not named as the home place of Messiah; it was to be Bethlehem
 - (2) Nazareth was an insignificant place – its location became lost
 - (3) and who was this Joseph
 - (B) Philip doesn’t debate on these or any other points
 - (1) he uses the simple invitation, just as Jesus did Himself
 - (2) a lesson for us in witnessing: “Come and see”
 - (3) ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!’ (Psalms 34:8)
 - (4) you do not have to understand to respond to the Gospel, but you must respond in order to understand its reality

E. Nathanael Accepts Jesus 1:47-51

1. Come to Jesus, He Will Make It Clear

- a. ‘Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”’ (John 1:47 NAS95)
 - (A) that is in itself a way to greet a person one has never met
 - (B) someone has translated this ‘an Israelite in whom there is no Jacob’ – a reference to the deceit that Jacob used to cheat Esau out of his blessing – for the history of Jacob is very close to the surface in the conversation that follows
 - (C) and Nathanael did not take this as a mere polite comment – “Oh, thank you!” – but as being a perceptive judgement by Jesus
 - (D) has Philip or someone else been describing him to Jesus
- b. ‘Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”’ (John 1:48 NAS95)
 - (A) Nathanael – his full name probably Nathanael Bartholomew (Bar Tolmai; son of Tolmai) – frankly questions

who told Jesus this?

- (B) Jesus' answer seems somewhat a non sequitur, having nothing to do with the question – what has a fig tree to do with this?
 - (1) fig trees were lovely, leafy places to sit under on sunny days
 - (2) they also screened a person from the passing traffic
 - (3) so became a place to study the Scriptures – and Philip's invitation to Nathanael was given in terms that would arouse the interest of a student of the Scriptures
- c. 'Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."' (John 1:49 NAS95)
 - (A) in whatever Nathanael was engaged under that fig tree, Jesus' words conveyed that He knew what seemed unknowable
 - (B) and Nathanael's confession – applying two Messianic terms to Jesus – shows that his skepticism was shattered.
 - (C) we lead a person to Jesus; it is He that will work His salvation

2. Better Is Coming

- a. '50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."' (John 1:50-51 NAS95)
 - (A) Nathaniel had experienced a small sample of Jesus and was amazed into belief
 - (1) Jesus had connected to Nathanael by divine knowledge
 - (2) but better things are coming
 - (3) the reference to the angels has the same words that are used to describe Jacob's vision of the ladder at Bethel
 - (B) Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, is also the Son of Man
 - (1) He is the Ladder that connects mankind to God
 - (2) He is the Mediator, between God and man
 - (3) Nathanael, and the others listening – 'you' is plural – will see not only Jesus in His glory, but His glorious work of salvation
- b. this is the marvellous message you and I have been given to tell

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NEB	New English Bible © 1961, 1970 Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 National Council of Churches of Christ; Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh
- Bruce -- *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
- BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
- EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI:
John, by Merrill C. Tenney
- EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton; 1903
John, by Marcus Dods
- Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.
- Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
- LBBC -- *Layman’s Bible Book Commentary, Volume 18: John*, by James E. Carter; Broadman Press, Nashville, TE; 1984
- NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
The Gospel according to John, by Leon Morris
- NTC – *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
- RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
- TEC -- *The Gospel according to John*, by George Allen Turner & Julius R. Mantey, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; ca 1965
- TTBC – Thru the Bible Commentary Series, by J. Vernon McGee; John 11-21; Thomas Nelson Publishers; 1991