

Teaching Points

This section emphasizes the calling of the first disciples of Jesus. The focus continues to shift from John the Baptist to Jesus. John repeats his exclamation about Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God.”

Discussion/Reminder: What is the significance of the title, “Lamb of God”?

Thoughts: *The Jews understood a lamb which takes away sin to be a sacrificial animal (see v.29). John is pointing out Jesus’ identity and His purpose for coming into the world. He will bear the sins of His people.*

John’s disciples are becoming Christ’s disciples. A true witness of Christ calls others to follow Christ, not the witness. A key word in this section is “follow” (including “followed” and “following”) in verses 37, 38, 40, and 43. Two of John’s disciples begin to follow Jesus. His invitation to them is to “come and see” where He is staying. Verse 14 says, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory....” This is the beginning of the disciples observing first-hand the person of Jesus. At Jesus’ invitation, they were brought into proximity to the Son of God!

Discussion: What is significant about Jesus telling Andrew to “come and see” instead of just saying “stay here and listen”? What is significant about Jesus giving them time? Isn’t that method slow and inefficient?

Thoughts: *The divine call is first that we might be with Christ. Jesus wanted the disciples to learn Who He was. It is significant that Andrew first called Jesus “Rabbi” but after spending time with Him he called Him the Messiah. When we are tempted to doubt Jesus’ methods, remember that these men turned the world upside down—and remember that the huge crowds that sometimes followed Him left after their bellies were full.*

There are a number of people being “found” in these verses: Andrew found his brother, Simon (Peter) and brought him to Jesus (vv.41-42); Jesus found Philip (v.43); and Philip found Nathanael (v.45). Jesus exercises His authority in this section by calling Philip to “follow” Him (v.43) and by renaming Simon (Cephas). It was the mission of the Word to come into the world to, “seek and save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10).

While Jesus certainly knows who it is that He finds, these men are just beginning to learn the identity of the one who’s finding them. Philip is excited to say, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets wrote....” The message of these men is that they have found a person—not a religion, but a real person, the Messiah.

Philip expresses the hope-filled words of many of the Jews of his day: “We have found the One Moses and the prophets told us would come.” It was a surprise to Nathanael

that this One would come out of Nazareth. This is pure prejudice coming out of his mouth. The Judeans despised the Galileans, but the Galileans despised people from Nazareth—Nathanael is from Cana in Galilee. His question was difficult for Philip to answer. Yes, something good can come out of Nazareth, namely, the Messiah! See also Matthew 2:23.

At Philip's invitation to "come and see," Nathanael is shocked that Jesus knows him, knows his character, and even knows where he was just sitting! Jesus indicates that Nathanael was not false ("no guile"). And Jesus gives another proof of His deity—nothing is hidden from His sight. The "true Israelite" found the true "King of Israel."

Discussion: How does Nathanael's exclamation about Jesus correspond to the overall purpose of John's letter (see John 20:30-31)? What does it say about the purpose of Jesus revealing those details to Nathanael about his whereabouts? What does the Lord know about you and how does that impact your understanding of Who He is?

Thoughts: *The purpose of John's Gospel is for us to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Everything Jesus said and did was to prove Who He is and why He must be believed, including His time with Nathanael. Because He knows everything about me, I am humbled. Because He still invites me to come and follow Him, I am amazed.*

In Genesis 28:12, Jacob received supernatural revelation from God. He saw angels ascending and descending from earth to heaven on a ladder. He saw the Lord at the top of the ladder. Jesus is telling Nathanael, "I am that ladder that brings supernatural revelation from God." And He uses the term "Son of Man" (Jesus' favorite self-designation) to communicate His deity (see Daniel 7:13,14).

Prayer Focus

Praise God for taking the initiative in sending His Son to us. He "found" us before we "found" Him. Praise the Lord Jesus as the very Son of God who knows all and is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.

Ask God for opportunities to invite people to "come and see" who Christ is—perhaps in a study of John's Gospel. Ask for boldness to tell others that Christ is the Son of God, the Savior.