The Gospel of John Chapter 1 Part 3 Testimony of the First Disciples

Read John 1:35-51

Vs 35-36 What happened the next day? John the Baptist, with two of his disciples, saw Jesus walking by and declared once again that He is the Lamb of God. “Behold” means to *stare intensely, attentively*. We know one of the two was Andrew (John 1:40). The other of the two is not identified, but it is reasonable to think it was John the Gospel writer himself (he gives such details he must have personally witnessed these things), who appears several times in his Gospel, but is not specifically named. Paul did this as well in 2 Cor 12:2-4.

Vs 37 What was the response of Andrew and John? They left John the Baptist’s ministry and followed Jesus. The implication is that these two disciples did this with John’s permission and direction. John the Baptist did not care about gathering disciples after himself. He was perfectly satisfied to have these disciples leave his circle and follow Jesus because it fulfilled his ministry rather than taking away from it. John 3:30

Vs 38 What was Jesus’ response? Jesus asked these two disciples an important and logical question, a question He continues to ask all humanity today. “What do you seek” meaning what are you looking to find? He probed them to find out whether they were motivated by idle curiosity or by a real desire to know Him. How did they respond? First, they called him “Rabbi” which acknowledges their believing Him to be a master, teacher. Next, they asked Him where He was staying. This word also means “abide” and is in reference to a place. Typical disciples in this time period often lived with their teachers. In essence, they were indicating to Jesus they wanted to be under His mastership.

Vs 39 What was Jesus’ response? For the answer, Jesus directed them to Himself, to observe Him (“come and see”). We know they were specifically wanting to know where He was residing because they went to that place. They then stayed there for the rest of the day (from 4 p.m.). Notice John knew EXACTLY at what time he encountered Jesus. Do you remember?

Vs 40 This is verse that tells us one of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.

Vs 41-42 What did Andrew do? He told Peter (his Greek name, which means *stone*) he had an encounter with the promised Messiah, that is the Christ (the Anointed One – a title). Then he led him to Jesus. What a beautiful picture of witnessing! Notice each time Andrew is mentioned in the Gospel of John, he is bringing someone to Jesus (John 6:8,12:22). What did Jesus say when He saw Simon Peter? By Word of Knowledge (a supernatural knowing) he called Peter by his given name (Simon) and his father’s family name, Jonah (“bar” means “son of”). What was his new name (what he shall be called), given by Jesus? Cephas (in Aramaic), which means stone.

Vs 43-44 Where did they go the next day? Notice “they” which implies Jesus, Andrew, John and Peter, which also implies these three stayed overnight where Jesus abode. They went to the region of Galilee.



What did they do in Galilee? They “found” Philip and Jesus told him “follow me”. Where was Philip from? Bethsaida, the same place Andrew and Peter were from.

Vs 45 What does Philip do? He found his friend Nathanael and told him “we’ve found the One who was prophesied about by Moses (Deu 18:15-19), in writing, and He is Jesus of Nazareth, Joseph’s son”.

Vs 46 What was Nathanael’s response? “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” He is quoting 1 Kings 9:11-13 Also, Nathanael’s skepticism stemmed from Nazareth’s obscurity (very small, population around 400), its low social status (not religiously prestigious), and prevailing regional prejudices against Galilee (containing many non-Jews). What does Philip say to Nathanael’s objections? “Come and see”, just as Jesus responded to Andrew and John, telling him he should forget his prejudices and just come and see for himself.

Vs 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael, He gave another Word of Knowledge. What did He say? “Look, a true Israelite in whom there is no guile (*deception*)”. Psalm 32:2

Vs 48 Nathanael was taken aback. How did he respond? He wondered how Jesus could know him (his character). Jesus further proves His power by giving one more Word of Knowledge. What did He say? Before Philip told him about Jesus, Jesus saw him under the fig tree. It is possible Nathanael liked to pray and meditate upon God and His Word under the shade of an actual fig tree. Yet, under the fig tree was a phrase Rabbis used to describe meditation on the Scriptures. We can suppose that Nathanael spent time in prayer and in meditating on the Scriptures, and Jesus told him “I saw you” there. Truly being the Messiah, He is telling Nathanael He knows details about his life, especially his devotion life.

Vs 49 This was so significant, Nathanael responded. Summarize his response. He said, “Master, you truly are the promised Messiah, the coming King of Israel”. Why do you think he responded like this? I imagine Nathanael truly worshipped God in secret and he realized the Messiah knew what man could not know.

Vs 50 Jesus, I imagine, was smiling when He said this. Paraphrase what Jesus said. “You think that’s something? You ain’t see nothin’ yet!”

Vs 51 What significant revelation did Jesus then make? He would see Heaven open! Jesus’ announcement of the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man probably connects with the dream of Jacob in Genesis 28:12, where Jacob saw a ladder from earth to heaven, and the angels ascending and descending upon it. Jesus said that He was the ladder, the link, between heaven and earth. When Nathanael came to understand that Jesus is the mediator between God and man, it would be an even greater sign (you will see greater things than these). While it seems like a rather obscure reference, it was extremely meaningful to Nathanael. Perhaps it was the very portion of Scripture Nathaniel meditated on under the fig tree.

This section of John shows four ways of coming to Jesus:
· Andrew came to Jesus because of the preaching of John.
· Peter came to Jesus because of the witness of his brother.
· Phillip came to Jesus as a result of the direct call of Jesus.
· Nathaniel came to Jesus as he overcame personal prejudices by a personal encounter with Jesus.

This section shows us four different witnesses testifying to the identity of Jesus.
· John the Baptist testified that Jesus is eternal, that He is the man uniquely anointed with the Holy Spirit, that He is the Lamb of God, and that Jesus is the unique Son of God.
· Andrew testified that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ.
· Phillip testified that Jesus is the One prophesied in the Old Testament.
· Nathaniel testified that Jesus is the Son of God and the King of Israel.