



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO **JOHN** LESSON 2



Chapter 1 Verses 15-51

Introduction

In our first lesson, John pulled back the curtain of eternity and introduced us to Jesus Christ as the **eternal Word** (logos) who became flesh. Before we ever met Jesus on the dusty roads of Judea, we discovered who He really is—the **Creator**, the Light of the world, and **God Himself dwelling among men**. That majestic introduction now gives way to eyewitness testimony.

Beginning in verse 15, John the Baptist steps forward as God's appointed witness, boldly identifying Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. From there, the spotlight shifts to the first men who encountered Jesus personally. Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael each respond differently, yet each discovers that the One standing before them is far greater than they first imagined.

As we work through these verses, notice how John's Gospel continually builds evidence rather than merely making assertions. Witness after witness confirms Christ's identity, prophecy after prophecy comes into focus, and ordinary people begin the extraordinary journey of becoming His disciples. By the end of this lesson, the question is no longer, "**Who is Jesus?**" but "**Will you follow Him?**"



John 1:15] *"John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me."*

John the Baptist is introduced as God's official witness concerning His Son. The verb "**cried**" suggests a loud, public proclamation rather than a quiet conversation. John is not giving a private opinion—he is heralding the arrival of Israel's King.

Notice the apparent paradox: "**He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.**"

At first glance, this sounds contradictory. Historically, John the Baptist was born approximately **five to six months before Jesus** (Luke 1). Jesus also began His public ministry after John. Yet John declares that Jesus ranks infinitely above him because Jesus did not begin His existence in Bethlehem—**He existed from eternity**. John recognizes Christ's absolute preeminence (John 8:56-58; Mic. 5:2).

This statement builds on everything John has already taught in verses 1-14. The One standing before Israel is the eternal Logos who entered history. Bethlehem marked His incarnation, not His beginning. John the Baptist understood that he was announcing Someone whose "*goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*" Mic. 5:2.

Jesus Himself later explained this truth in John 8. When challenged by the religious leaders, Jesus declared, "***Before Abraham was, I AM.***"

That was far more than a claim of age—it was a direct declaration of eternal existence using the divine name revealed in Exodus. John the Baptist understood this long before many others did (John 8:58; Ex. 3:14).



John 1:16-17] *"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."*

John now shifts from **who Jesus is** to **what believers receive from Him**. Because Christ possesses the fullness of God, every spiritual blessing flows from Him alone. Nothing originates with us; everything begins with His inexhaustible abundance. Col. 1:19; Col. 2:9-10.

The phrase "***of his fulness have all we received***" speaks of drawing continually from an unlimited source. Like drinking from an artesian spring, every believer drinks from the same fountain, yet the supply is never diminished because Christ's fullness is infinite.

The expression "***grace for grace***" has been understood as **grace upon grace**—one wave of God's favor continually replacing another. Just as ocean waves never cease rolling onto the shore, God's grace continually meets every need of the believer. We never exhaust His provision. 2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 4:16.



Verse 17 is not contrasting an evil Old Testament with a good New Testament. The Law itself was holy, just, and good because it came from God. Its purpose, however, was to reveal sin, establish God's righteous standard, and demonstrate mankind's inability to save himself (Rom. 7:12; Gal. 3:24). John carefully chooses his words: "***The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.***"

Moses was the instrument through whom God **gave** the Law. Jesus is far more than another messenger—grace and truth **came** in His very Person. He did not simply teach grace; He embodies it. He did not merely speak truth; He is **the Truth**.



A connection back to the Tabernacle. In Exodus, God's glory filled the Tabernacle after its completion (Ex. 40:34-35). In John 1:14, Christ "tabernacled" among us. Now, in verses 16-17, those who come to this living Tabernacle receive from His fullness rather than merely observing God's glory from a distance. The Old Testament sanctuary pointed forward to the Person in whom God's fullness would permanently dwell.



Modern culture often swings between two extremes—**truth without grace**, which becomes harsh **legalism**, or **grace without truth**, which becomes **moral compromise**. Jesus embraced neither extreme. He perfectly united grace and truth in His own Person, calling sinners to repentance while freely offering forgiveness. As His followers, our witness should reflect that same balance, speaking truth without fear and extending grace without surrendering biblical conviction. Eph. 4:15; Titus 2:11-13.



John 1:18] *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."*

Throughout the Old Testament, men such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel all encountered manifestations of God, so how can John say **"No man hath seen God at any time"**? The answer lies in understanding the distinction between **God's essential nature** and His **manifestations**.

John is speaking of God's **essential being**. God is spirit, invisible by nature, and beyond human perception. The Son alone possesses perfect knowledge of the Father because He has eternally existed in intimate fellowship with Him (John 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17). So, throughout Scripture, people saw God appearing in visible forms—a theophany or anthropomorphic manifestation—but no one has ever seen God's infinite essence in all His glory (Ex. 33:20; Isa. 6:1-5; Ezek. 1; Dan. 7:9-14; 1 Tim. 6:16).

Finally, John says, **"...he hath declared him."** Jesus is God's own explanation of Himself. If you want to know the Father, you do not begin with philosophy—you begin with Christ.

This verse forms a structural triplet with verses 1 and 14, creating a choreographed design that demonstrates supernatural authorship. Look at how these distinct triplets mirror each other to establish a flawless symmetry across the prologue:

- **The Word's Identity:** In the beginning was the Word (v. 1) → The Word was made flesh (v. 14) → No man hath seen God at any time (v. 18).
- **The Word's Fellowship:** The Word was with God (v. 1) → The Word dwelt among us (v. 14) → The Son is in the bosom of the Father (v. 18).
- **The Word's Mission:** The Word was God (v. 1) → Full of grace and truth (v. 14) → He hath declared Him (v. 18).



John 1:19-20] *"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ."*

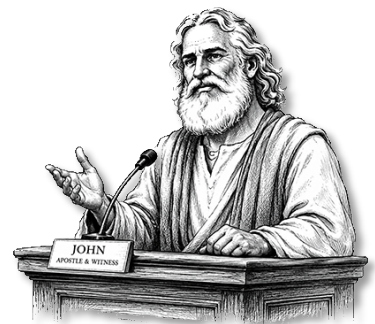
John now introduces the first official investigation into the ministry surrounding Jesus. The word translated **"record"** can also be understood as **"testimony"** or **"witness."** Throughout this Gospel, John repeatedly presents witnesses besides himself who testify to Christ's identity. The courtroom motif has begun.

Notice who initiates the encounter with John the Baptist: **"...the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem..."**

Here, **"the Jews"** does **not** mean the Jewish people as a whole.

John frequently uses this expression as a **synecdoche**—a figure of speech in which a part represents the whole—to describe **the religious authorities headquartered in Jerusalem**.

John was baptizing at **Bethabara**, on the Jordan River, roughly twenty to thirty miles from Jerusalem. Yet crowds were traveling that entire distance on foot to hear him preach. His influence had become so significant that the Temple authorities organized an official inquiry to determine who he claimed to be. Their opening question seems simple: **"Who art thou?"** But it carried enormous theological implications.



The religious authorities were not merely asking for his name—they wanted to know whether John claimed to be one of Israel's long-awaited prophetic figures. John's answer is immediate, emphatic, and humble: **"I am not the Christ."**

The Temple delegation likely expected one of **three** possible answers. Jewish expectation during the first century centered on three prophetic figures foretold in the Old Testament:

- **The Messiah** — the promised King (Mic. 5:2; Isa. 9:6-7).
- **Elijah** — expected to return before the Day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5-6).
- **The Prophet like Moses** — promised in Deut. 18:15-18.

John's questioners unknowingly fulfill an Old Testament pattern. Before the true King is publicly revealed, God sends a herald to prepare His way. Just as ambassadors announced the arrival of an earthly king by preparing roads and summoning the people, John the Baptist serves as Heaven's royal herald, preparing hearts rather than highways (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1).

There is an important lesson in John's response. The closer a servant walks with God, the less concerned he becomes with his own reputation. Ironically, his refusal to exalt himself became one of the greatest evidences of his authenticity (Matt. 23:11-12; John 3:27-30).

The delegation from Jerusalem represents more than a simple fact-finding mission. It introduces a recurring biblical example: when religious authority becomes invested in preserving its own traditions and position, it **often** fails to recognize God's unfolding revelation. God repeatedly raises His servants outside the centers of established power—Moses in Midian, Samuel as a child, Elijah from Gilead, Amos the shepherd, John the Baptist in the wilderness, and ultimately Jesus of Nazareth. John's Gospel traces this growing conflict until the religious leaders reject the very Messiah whom their own Scriptures foretold, while the Father vindicates and exalts His Son (John 5:39-40; John 7:47-49; Acts 7:51-52).



But there is an **even deeper Johannine theme**. John's Gospel repeatedly presents **two competing sources of authority that permeate history (Above and Below)**:

Authority from above



Authority from below

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Originates with the Father. | • Derived from a religious position. |
| • Confirmed by Scripture. | • Protected by tradition. |
| • Authenticated by the Spirit. | • Concerned with reputation and appearance. |
| • Recognized by a remnant. | • Rejects God because of unbelief. |
| | • Acknowledged by the masses. |

The real conflict is not simply Jesus versus the Pharisees. The conflict is between true revelation from heaven and authority originating in fallen human systems.



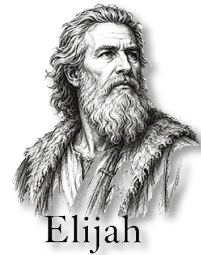
Religious influence, institutional authority, and public recognition are never substitutes for God's calling. Modern believers should be careful not to equate popularity, position, or affiliation with spiritual authenticity. Like John the Baptist, our task is not to build our own platform but to faithfully point others to Christ, allowing Him alone to receive the glory (1 Cor. 3:5-7; Col. 1:18).



- **John 1:21]** *"And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No."*

The Jewish leaders recognized that the Old Testament pointed to three great figures who would **precede or accompany the coming Kingdom**. Since **John had already denied being the Messiah** (v.20), only two possibilities remained. The delegation immediately asks **two** more questions: "**Art thou Elias?**" (Elijah) and "**Art thou that prophet (Moses)?**"

1 "**Art thou Elias?**" John answers plainly: "**I am not.**" At first, this appears to create a contradiction because Jesus later said: "*If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.*" Matt. 11:14. What did Jesus mean? John the Baptist was **not literally Elijah returned from heaven**. Elijah never died but was taken into heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). John rightly denied being Elijah himself.



Jesus explained that John came "**in the spirit and power of Elias**" (Luke 1:17). John's ministry fulfilled Elijah's prophetic role in preparing the way for the Messiah, but he was not Elijah's personal return. Had Israel received her King, John's ministry would have fulfilled that preparatory role, and Elijah would have returned. However, because the nation rejected its Messiah, Malachi's prophecy awaits literal fulfillment in the future before Christ's Second Coming. Mal. 4:5-6; Matt. 17:10-11.

i Elijah's translation into heaven without dying (2 Kings 2) and Malachi's promise of his future return have led many scholars to associate Elijah with one of the **Two Witnesses** of Revelation 11. While John ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah, Revelation appears to anticipate Elijah's future ministry before the Day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5-6; Rev. 11:3-6).

John had **an Elijah-type ministry**. Like Elijah, he appeared suddenly from the wilderness, dressed similarly, boldly confronted national apostasy, and called Israel to repentance.

2 "**Art thou that prophet?**" The second question points directly to Moses' prophecy: "*The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee...*" Deut. 18:15. Many Jews expected this Prophet to be someone distinct from the Messiah. To this question, John simply answered, "**No.**"



Ironically, both expectations ultimately converge in Jesus Christ. He is not only Israel's Messiah but also the greater Moses whom Deuteronomy anticipated. Acts 3:22-23. These questions by the Pharisees demonstrate just how intense Messianic expectation had become. The religious authorities were not questioning whether these prophecies would be fulfilled—they were trying to determine **which prophetic role John claimed for himself**. Their expectations were biblically grounded, but their understanding of God's timetable was woefully incomplete.



There is an important lesson in John's answers. Faithfulness often means resisting titles, honors, or identities that God has not given us. John understood his calling so clearly that he had no need to exaggerate it. Spiritual maturity is found not in becoming someone impressive, but in faithfully fulfilling the assignment God has entrusted to us (Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 4:1-2).



John 1:22] "*Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?*"



John 1:23] *He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias."*

They had been commissioned by the religious leadership in Jerusalem to investigate this remarkable preacher whose ministry was drawing thousands into the wilderness. They needed a definitive answer to take back to those who had sent them. he defines himself entirely by Scripture: **"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness..."** John's identity was rooted in God's Word rather than in public opinion.

He then quotes **Isaiah 40:3: "Make straight the way of the Lord."** In the ancient Near East, roads were often repaired and cleared before the arrival of a king.



John 1:24-25] *"And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"*

John now identifies the delegation more specifically: **"And they which were sent were of the Pharisees."** Although the delegation consisted of **priests and Levites** (v.19), they represented the interests of the **Pharisees**, the dominant religious influence among the Jewish people.



The Pharisees, of which there were approximately **6,000 during the time of Christ**, were guardians of the synagogue and oral tradition, while the Sadducees were the Temple establishment, accepting only the Torah and denying the resurrection, angels, and the supernatural world.

The Pharisees asking, **"Why baptizest thou then...?"** are no longer concerned with who John is but under what authority he acts. To them, authority only flowed through recognized religious offices. Since John the Baptist denied all three identities, his ministry simply did not fit into their theological mindset. Rather than asking whether God might be doing something new within the framework of Scripture, they questioned John's credentials.



John 1:26-27] *"John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."*

In effect, John says, **"My baptism is only the preparation."** Water itself has no saving power; rather, John's ministry prepared the way (Matt. 3:11).

Then comes one of the most tragic statements in John's Gospel: **"...there standeth one among you, whom ye know not."** The Messiah was not merely coming soon—**He was already present.** John's Gospel repeatedly highlights this tragic irony: those who knew the Scriptures best often failed to recognize the One to whom the Scriptures pointed; they were within reach of the Messiah, yet they remained spiritually unaware.

Finally, John declares: **"...whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."** Among Jewish servants, removing another person's sandals was considered one of the lowest household tasks. According to several rabbinic traditions, disciples might perform many services for their teacher, but untying his sandals was regarded as work too degrading even for a disciple.



There is also a subtle echo of Abraham's servant (Eleazar) in Genesis 24. The servant's mission was not to exalt himself but to introduce the bride to the bridegroom. Likewise, John introduces Israel to her Messiah and then quietly fades into the background. Later, John will describe himself as **"the friend of the bridegroom"** who rejoices at the bridegroom's voice (John 3:29).



The delegation's greatest problem was not a lack of information but a **lack of spiritual perception**. They possessed the Scriptures, understood the prophetic promises, and diligently investigated religious movements, yet **they failed to recognize the fulfillment standing before them**.



One of the greatest spiritual dangers is becoming so focused on secondary issues that we miss Christ Himself. The delegation debated authority, credentials, and religious practice while the Messiah stood unnoticed in their midst. In every generation, believers should continually ask whether their study, ministry, and traditions are drawing them closer to Christ or merely keeping them occupied around Him (Heb. 12:2; Col. 2:6-8).



John 1:28] *"These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing."*

The name **Bethabara** is commonly understood to mean **"House of the Crossing."** Fittingly, it was here that John called Israel to cross from unbelief to repentance in preparation for the arrival of her Messiah.



John 1:29] *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

John's testimony reaches its climax as he sees Jesus approaching and cries out: **"Behold the Lamb of God..."** **"Behold"** is a command. John is calling everyone present to fix their attention upon Jesus. The herald has completed his work; all eyes are now directed toward the King.

John continues, **"...which taketh away the sin of the world."** Jesus would not merely cover sin for another year as the Day of Atonement sacrifices did. He would bear sin away once and for all through His own sacrifice (1 Pet. 2:24; Heb. 9:26), but not merely the sins of Israel. The promised Jewish Messiah would become the Savior of the whole world (John 3:16-17; 1 John 2:2).



John 1:30] *"This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me."*



John 1:31] *"And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water."*



John 1:32] *"And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him."*



John 1:33] *"And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."*

John again repeats his earlier declaration: **"After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me."** John wants there to be no misunderstanding.

John and Jesus were relatives through their mothers (Luke 1:36), so John is not saying he had never met Jesus. Rather, he means that he did not previously **know Him as the Messiah**.



John does not record Jesus' baptism in his gospel. However, John describes the sign God had promised: the Holy Spirit descended visibly at Jesus' baptism and **remained** upon Him. Unlike temporary empowerments seen in the Old Testament, the Spirit permanently rested upon Christ because He alone possessed the fullness of the Spirit without measure (Isa. 11:2; John 3:34).



John 1:34-35] *"And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;"*



John 1:36-37] *"And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."*



John 1:38] *"Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?"*



John 1:39-40] *"He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."*



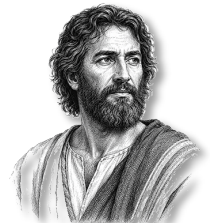
John 1:41] *"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."*

In v. 38, John concludes his testimony with an unmistakable declaration: **"This is the Son of God."** His witness is now complete. The following day, John again sees Jesus and repeats, **"Behold the Lamb of God!"**

John does not try to retain his disciples. Instead, he intentionally points them away from himself and toward Christ. Upon hearing John's testimony, **two of his disciples** immediately leave John and begin following Jesus. One is identified as **Andrew** (v.40); the other is traditionally understood to be **John the Apostle**.

John mentions the time; the point is that John vividly remembers the moment. Such precise details are characteristic of an eyewitness.

Although Peter would later become the better-known apostle, Andrew consistently appears in Scripture as someone who brings people to Jesus. Andrew announces to his brother, **"We have found the Messiah."** **Messias** is the Hebrew title meaning **"the Anointed One,"** translated into Greek as **Christos**, or **Christ**. These are titles that declare Jesus to be God's promised Deliverer, foretold throughout the Old Testament (Dan. 9:25-26; Ps. 2:2).



Andrew



SOD

There is a quiet but profound progression taking place. John the Baptist points two disciples to Jesus. One of those disciples brings Peter. Peter will later proclaim the Gospel to thousands, opening the door of faith to both Jews and Gentiles. Behind those monumental events stands one seemingly simple invitation: **"Come and see."** God's kingdom often advances through ordinary conversations that produce extraordinary eternal results.



Our culture often measures influence by **visibility and numbers**. Andrew reminds us that God's kingdom advances more often one person at a time. We may never know how far-reaching the results will be when we faithfully introduce one friend, one family member, or one neighbor to Jesus Christ. Never underestimate what God can accomplish through a single invitation to "**come and see**."

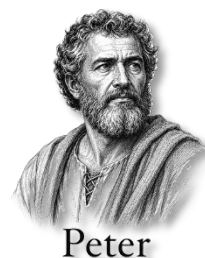


John 1:42] *"And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."*

Andrew's greatest accomplishment is summarized in five simple words: "**And he brought him to Jesus**." Andrew does not attempt to convince Simon through argument or debate. He simply brings him into the presence of Christ. Every believer's highest calling is the same—to bring people to Jesus and allow Him to do the transforming.

Before Simon introduced himself, Jesus already knew his name, his family, and his future (John 2:24-25; John 4:17-19). Jesus begins with Simon's present identity, "**Thou shalt be called Cephas**."

It is worth noticing that Jesus does **not** call Simon a massive **rock** here. The Greek word **Petros** refers to a **stone**, while **petra** describes a great bedrock or massive rock formation. Later, in Matthew 16:18, Jesus will distinguish between Peter and the great foundation upon which the Church is built. Peter himself later makes it clear that Christ—**not Peter**—is the chief cornerstone of God's spiritual house (Matt. 16:18; 1 Pet. 2:4-8).



Peter

Jesus consistently sees people from Heaven's perspective rather than man's. Simon is still an unstable, outspoken fisherman, yet Jesus immediately addresses what he will become under God's transforming work. Throughout Scripture, God often renames individuals at pivotal moments in His redemptive plan—Abram becomes Abraham, Jacob becomes Israel, and now Simon becomes Cephas. Each new name reflects God's purpose rather than man's past.



Jesus does not merely forgive our past—He transforms our future. He sees beyond our weaknesses, failures, and limitations to the work His grace intends to accomplish. Like Simon, believers are often called according to what God is making them, not simply what they presently are. Phil. 1:6; 2 Cor. 5:17.

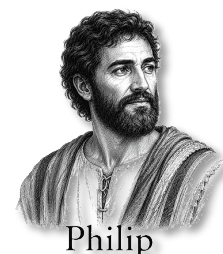


Modern culture often defines people by their past, their failures, or their present circumstances. Jesus does the opposite. He sees what His grace can accomplish in a surrendered life. The same Lord who renamed Simon is still transforming ordinary believers into faithful servants for His kingdom, one life at a time.



John 1:43-44] *"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter."*

This careful sequence of days is characteristic of John's Gospel. Unlike Andrew, who first followed Jesus after hearing John's testimony, Philip is personally sought out by Jesus. Some are brought to Christ through the witness of others, but every true call ultimately comes from Christ Himself.



Philip

Notice with Philip, there are no lengthy explanations given, no promises are offered, and no conditions are negotiated. Philip simply responds to the invitation, "**Follow me.**"

Bethsaida means "**House of Fishing**" or "**House of the Fisherman.**" Located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, it produced several of Jesus' earliest disciples. Although Philip bears a Greek name, there is no reason to conclude he was a Gentile. Greek names had become common among Jews living in Galilee because of the widespread influence of Hellenistic culture.

 **John 1:45]** *"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*

 **John 1:46]** *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."*

No sooner has Philip begun following Jesus than he begins searching for someone else. "**Philip findeth Nathanael...**" Philip's announcement, "**We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write...**", is a remarkable statement. Philip recognizes that Jesus is not merely another rabbi or prophet but the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament. To those who were paying attention to the writings of Moses through the Prophets, Scripture consistently pointed forward to the coming Messiah (Gen. 3:15; Gen. 22:8; Deut. 18:15-18; Isa. 53; Mic 5:2).

Nathanael immediately responds: "**Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?**" Nazareth was an obscure village in lower Galilee with no significant Old Testament reputation. It was so insignificant that it is never mentioned in the Old Testament, the writings of Josephus, or the Talmud. Nathanael's statement was likely a reflection of regional prejudice rather than unbelief.

Philip does not argue. He simply replies: "**Come and see.**"

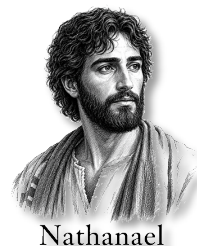
Philip's statement demonstrates an impressive grasp of the Old Testament for a new disciple. He immediately recognizes that Jesus fulfills the promises given through **Moses and the Prophets**. Also, Nathanael's skepticism was understandable. From a human perspective, Nazareth was an unlikely place for Israel's Messiah to emerge. Again, God's plan repeatedly unfolds through unexpected people and unexpected places, overturning human assumptions.

 **John 1:47]** *"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"*

 **John 1:48]** *"Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."*

Jesus is not saying Nathanael is sinless by saying that Nathanael has "**no guile!**". He is describing a man of genuine faith and integrity—a man without deceit or hypocrisy. Nathanael is understandably startled. He has never met Jesus. How could this stranger know both his character and his heart?

This is another example of Jesus' supernatural knowledge, a theme that will recur throughout John's Gospel. Jesus' description of Nathanael is a deliberate play on the history of Israel itself. Here is an "**Israelite indeed**"—one who reflects the transformed character of Israel rather than the deceptive character of Jacob.



Nathanael

~ God is never offended by sincere questions that seek the truth. ~



The reference to "**no guile**" quietly points back to Jacob's transformation. Jacob began as the deceiver, and God changed his name to **Israel**. Nathanael is introduced as a true Israelite whose character reflects that transformation. The mention of the **fig tree** carries symbolic overtones. Throughout the Old Testament, sitting under one's vine and fig tree became a picture of peace, blessing, and meditation upon God's promises (1 Kings 4:25; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10). Also, throughout the Old Testament, the fig tree frequently serves as a symbol of Israel, especially her spiritual condition.

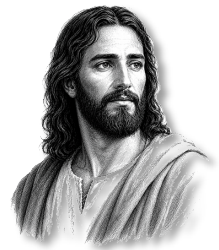


Here is another glimpse into Christ's divine omniscience. Before His public ministry had scarcely begun, Jesus quietly demonstrated an attribute belonging only to God. Nathanael's private moment beneath the fig tree was fully known to Christ. John is steadily building his case that the One walking the roads of Galilee is none other than the eternal Word (Logos) made flesh, possessing the knowledge and authority of God Himself. This prepares us for John's later statement that Jesus "**knew all men**" and "**needed not that any should testify of man.**" John 2:24-25.



John 1:49] *"Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."*

Only moments earlier, he had questioned whether anything good could come from Nazareth. Now his skepticism has become reverence. Jesus is no longer merely a teacher from Galilee—He is the One who possesses divine knowledge, leading Nathanael to declare, "***Thou art the Son of God***", and "***Thou art the King of Israel.***" This is an unmistakable Messianic title. Nathanael recognizes Jesus as the promised descendant of David, the rightful King foretold throughout the Old Testament (Ps. 2:6-7; Zech. 9:9; 2 Sam. 7:12-16).



John is steadily assembling witnesses to establish Jesus' identity. John the Baptist has testified, Andrew has testified, Philip has testified, and now Nathanael adds his own confession.



Many people today begin where Nathanael began—with honest questions and understandable skepticism. The issue is not whether questions exist, but whether we are willing to follow the evidence wherever it leads. A sincere heart that seeks truth will ultimately be confronted with the same question every person must answer: **Who is**

Jesus Christ?



John 1:50] *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these."*



John 1:51] *"And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."*

The miracle of Christ's supernatural knowledge was enough to bring Nathanael to faith, but Jesus immediately tells him that far greater revelations lie ahead. The miracles recorded throughout John's Gospel are not ends in themselves—they are **signs** (*semeia*) designed to reveal who Jesus truly is (John 2:11; John 20:30-31).

Jesus then introduces one of His favorite titles for Himself: "**The Son of man.**" This title appears more than eighty times in the Gospels and emphasizes both His humanity and His Messianic authority. It also points directly to Daniel's vision of the heavenly King who receives everlasting dominion from the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:13-14).

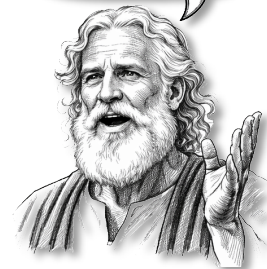
Jesus continues: "**...ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.**" This refers to **Jacob's dream** at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-17), where Jacob saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it.

Jesus now makes an astonishing claim. **He is that ladder.** He is the living connection between Heaven and Earth. Everything that Jacob saw in that vision is fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ. He is the true Bethel—the "**House of God**"—through whom God and man are brought together (1 Tim. 2:5).

Jesus intentionally replaces **Jacob's ladder** with **Himself**. The ladder was never the central point of Jacob's dream; it was a picture anticipating Christ. Every movement between Heaven and earth ultimately centers upon the Son of Man. What Jacob saw symbolically, the disciples would witness literally as they walked with Jesus.



All of Scripture
ultimately
testifies of Him!



Lesson Conclusion

In this lesson, the evidence for Jesus' identity continues to build with remarkable clarity. John the Baptist boldly identifies Him as the eternal Son of God, the Lamb of God, and the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, while the first disciples begin responding to His call with simple faith and immediately invite others to meet Him. By the close of the chapter, Nathanael recognizes Jesus as both the Son of God and the King of Israel, and Jesus reveals Himself as the true bridge between Heaven and earth, fulfilling Jacob's vision at Bethel. As we move into Chapter 2, the witness is complete, the first disciples have been gathered, and Jesus is about to begin the series of miraculous **signs (semeia)** that will publicly reveal His glory and confirm that He is indeed the promised Messiah.

Next Lesson: For our next lesson, study John Chapter 2. There are two events that take place: First, the changing of the water into wine. Why "the third day"? What was distinctive about the water used? What does the "Red Heifer" have to do with it? Second, the cleansing of the temple.



Lesson materials at: www.TrustingInGrace.com

QUICK LEGEND FOR PaRDeS SYMBOLS



PESHAT

The plain literal meaning of the text.



REMEZ

Patterns, types, and prophetic fingerprints beneath the surface.



DERASH

Points out lessons that we learn from the scripture.



SOD

Deeper prophetic and heavenly realities hidden in the text.



GALILEE

IN THE TIME OF CHRIST



LOWER
GALILEE

Nazareth •

Cana •

Magdala •

Capernaum •

Tiberias •

SEA OF
GALILEE

Jordan
River

Lake
Huleh

• Bethsaida

UPPER
GALILEE

Jordan
River

↓ To the
Dead Sea

• City or Town
— River

JOHN CHAPTER ONE

S E R B D T S T D E B G H F T T	AMONG	GRACE
N H I E S R L U S O R E U A U W	BECOME	JESUS
E E I I H E O M S A O L H O A B	BEFORE	JOHN
S S R N W T E W C E N L H E E H	BEHELD	LEVITES
T H A D E D A E O E J T B C L W	BELIEVE	MADE
C G S I S T A F S W I N O D O D	BLOOD	MOSES
F R O A A W H S E W H M E R T G	CHRIST	POWER
D L I N A S D O G S E H L V L T	COMETH	PRIESTS
I L E W S H T U R T T D A O I W	DWELT	RECORD
E D R S O W S S S E E S R H T G	ELIAS	SHINETH
C D N A H S D S E R V Y E D O E	ESAIAS	THINGS
W O E A E R G H S T T E R I R S	FATHER	TRUTH
M A M N M N E W O G I O I O R N	FLESH	WITHOUT
N A T E I O I W M N C V F L H P	FULNESS	WITNESS
N I D H T I N G O E E E E O E B	GIVEN	WORD
W E T E H H T G R P B N J L I B	GLORY	WORLD