

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

John: Believing On The Christ, The Son Of God, For Eternal Life

Part IX: Believing On Christ Due To His Early Omniscience Regarding His Disciples, John 1:40-51

B. Believing On Christ Due To His Early Omniscience Regarding Nathanael

(John 1:43-51)

I. Introduction

- A. Since one must trust in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God to have eternal life according to John 20:31, it is important that we see evidences of His *supernatural* qualities as **God** even at the **START** of His earthly work.
- B. John 1:43-51 records Christ's early *omniscience* as **God** as evident in His first meeting of Nathanael.

II. Believing On Christ Due To His Early Omniscience Regarding Nathanael, John 1:43-51.

- A. The day after Jesus met Peter, He started for Galilee, and found Philip and called him to follow Him, Jn. 1:43.
- B. Philip was from Peter and Andrew's town of Bethsaida in Galilee (John 1:44), and he found Nathanael and told him they had found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the "son" of Joseph, John 1:45. John the Baptizer had testified that Jesus was the **Son of God** (John 1:34), so Philip here likely referred to Jesus' identity with his earthly family in calling Him **Joseph's** son, Matt. 13:55a.
- C. Nazareth "had a negative reputation at this period" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to John 1:46), so Nathanael naturally asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46a KJV)
- D. Philip replied, "Come and see" (John 1:46b), a suggestion next used by Jesus to reveal that He was far more than Joseph's alleged earthly "son" from a town with a bad name, but the *omniscient Son of God*, Jn. 1:47-51:
 - 1. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, before Nathanael could say anything to him, Jesus announced of Nathanael, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" (John 1:47 ESV)
 - 2. Nathanael was obviously stunned at this remark by Jesus, and so he replied, "How do you know me?", and Jesus responded, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," John 1:48 ESV.
 - 3. Nathanael answered, exclaiming, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (John 1:49), and to learn **why** Nathanael responded with such a **lofty claim** about Jesus, we note the **context**:
 - a. Jesus' later John 1:51 remark to Nathanael that he would see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on Christ in the Messianic Kingdom recalls the event in Genesis 28:10-12 where Jacob had a dream at Bethel about a stairway from God in heaven to himself on the earth, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon him!
 - b. In that context, Jacob had just deceived his father Isaac, pretending to be his brother Esau to steal his blessing (Gen. 27:1-36), so Nathanael had been thinking of Jacob's deception and God's grace in thus giving him, a sinful deceiver, the dream of God's angels ascending and descending on him in support of God's granting him the right to participate in the Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis 28:13-15; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 276. In addition, since Jesus referred to Nathanael as an "Israelite indeed," He likely referred to the later gracious name of "Israel" that God gave Jacob, that name meaning "Prince of God," a name given to Jacob for rightly finally looking to God in faith for protection from Esau, Genesis 32:9-28!
 - c. Thus, when Jesus first saw Nathanael and announced that he was a true Israelite, a recipient of God's grace, in whom there was no deceit, it stunned Nathanael since he had just been thinking of Jacob's life!
 - d. Then, when Nathanael asked for an explanation from Jesus as to how he knew of him, and Jesus relayed how He had seen Nathanael under the fig tree before Philip had called him, the place where Nathanael had thus been thinking about God's grace to Jacob, Nathanael realized he was speaking with One who could see and knew him **omnisciently** -- the Son of God and the King of Israel!
 - 4. Jesus added that because Nathanael had believed in Him through what Jesus had told him about his thoughts about Jacob while under the fig tree (John 1:50), Nathanael would be a recipient of God's grace like Jacob! He too would see heaven open, but not just in a vision like Jacob, but in real life, and see God's angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man in the Messianic Kingdom, John 1:51. Jesus was claiming that Nathanael who trusted in Him would see Him in His glory as part of Jesus' Kingdom!

Lesson: *Jesus revealed He omnisciently knew about Nathanael before they met, so Nathanael trusted in Christ as the Son of God and King of Israel. For his faith, Jesus promised Nathanael participation in His future Kingdom.*

Application: *(1) May we like Nathanael trust in Christ for salvation due to His evident omniscience. (2) May we rely on our omniscient Lord Who knows all about us as His sheep adequately to shepherd us as He did Nathanael.*