

IV. THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY

§20: THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

John 1:35–51

The First Disciples: Andrew and Simon Peter

1:35–42

35 Again on the next day John was standing,
and two of his disciples,

36 and he looked upon Jesus as He walked and said:
Behold, the lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speaking,
and they followed Jesus.

38 But Jesus, having turned and seen them following, said to them:
What do you seek?

And they said to Him:

Rabbi!—which translated is said [means]: Teacher!—Where are You staying?

39 He said to them:

Come, and you will see.

Therefore they came and saw where He was staying,
and they stayed with him that day;
it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two who heard John and followed Him
was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter.

41 He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him:
We have found the Messiah—which translated is: Christ.

42 He brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked upon him and said:

You are Simon the son of John;

you shall be called Cephas—which translated is: Peter.

The Calling of Philip and Nathanael

1:43–51

43 The next day He purposed to go forth into Galilee,
and He found Philip.

Jesus said to him: Follow Me.

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida,
of the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him:

We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, wrote:

Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.

46 And Nathanael said to him:

Is it possible for anything good to be of Nazareth?

Philip said to him: Come and see!

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him and said concerning him:

Behold, truly an Israelite in whom there is no treachery.

48 Nathanael said to Him:

From where [or, 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.

49 Nathanael answered Him:

Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said to him:
Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe?
Greater than these things you shall see.

51 And he said to them:
Truly, truly [Amen, Amen] I say to you:
You shall see heaven opened
and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

Notes

1. **Rabbi (1:38).** From the Hebrew for “My Great One” which was used as a title of honor for a teacher.
2. **Tenth hour (1:39).** Many feel that John counts time not according to the Jewish (and ordinary Roman) system from sunrise to sunset, but according to the Roman civil time, from midnight to midnight. In that case the tenth hour would be 10 A.M. According to the Jewish reckoning, the tenth hour would be 4 P.M.
3. **Messiah/Christ.** Both mean “anointed one.” Messiah comes from the Hebrew *mashiach*. Christ comes from the Greek *christos*. Actually, if we were to do for English readers what John did for Greek readers, we would write: “We have found the Messiah—which translated is: Anointed One.”
4. **Cephas/Peter.** Both mean “rock.” Cephas comes from the Aramaic (related to Hebrew) *keypha*; Peter from the Greek *petros*. More at Matt. 16:18.
5. **Nathanael.** Mentioned only here and John 21:2. Some have identified him with Bartholomew based on the following observations: (1) Nathanel is never mentioned in Matthew, Mark, Luke; (2) Bartholomew is never mentioned in John; (3) in Matthew, Mark and Luke, Bartholomew follows Philip in the lists of the apostles, and in John, Philip brings Nathanael to Jesus.
6. **Amen, Amen (1:51).** From a Hebrew word meaning “truly.” The root contains the ideas of “supported, reliable, faithful, trustworthy, firm, established.”

Questions

1. Summarize the events of the following days:
 - a. Day 1: John 1:19–28
 - b. Day 2: John 1:29–34 (“the next day,” 1:29)
 - c. Day 3: John 1:35–42 (“the next day,” 1:35)
 - d. Day 4: John 1:43–51 (“the next day,” 1:43)
 - e. Day 5?: John 2:1 (“on the third day”)
 - f. Days 6ff.: John 2:12 (“a few days”)