

John – Lesson 1

John Chapter 1

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Introduction: We begin a new study this week on the book of John. The Gospel attributed to John is unique from the previous three gospels. They, in considerable degree, parallel each other as they present the life and ministry of our Lord. John, on the other hand, presents aspects of Christ's life and ministry nowhere else recorded. One reason may be that John wrote later than the other three gospels.

Historians have generally taken the position that the Gospel of John was written between A.D. 85 and 90. As the Holy Spirit led him, he presented aspects of Christ's ministry the others did not. Because John had more than a half a century to reflect upon and understand the transition having been there thru it all. This gospel is perhaps the most spiritually mature. This is particularly so in respect to his clear presentation of salvation.

The theme of the Gospel is clear in the initial paragraphs. Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God. He is the eternal Word and, in fact, is God. His advent was through His incarnation, a revelation of God as man. The other resounding theme is how one might have eternal life through Christ by trusting Him as Savior. Two words are prominent throughout: "believe" and "life."

Overview of John 1: *The synopsis of the entire book is contained therein: (1) Jesus clearly is God. (2) He is Creator, life, and light. (3) Through faith in Him comes salvation. (4) He is the incarnation of the eternal Word. The Apostle then continues his introduction of the life and ministry of Christ. He begins with the ministry of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ. More detail is given concerning the incarnate Logos, including John's description of Him as the Lamb of God and His baptism.*

Albert Barnes had this to say in the introduction of his study about the book of John.

John, the writer of this Gospel, was the son of Zebedee and Salome. His father was a fisherman of Galilee, though it would appear that he was not destitute of property, and was not in the lowest condition of life. He had hired men in his employ as recorded in Mark 1:20. *Salome* is described as one who attended our Saviour in his travels, and ministered to his wants. Jesus commended his own mother Mary, on the cross, to John, and he took her to his own home (John 19:26,27), with whom, history informs us, she lived until her death, about fifteen years after the crucifixion of Christ; and John was known to Caiaphas, the high-priest, Joh18:15. From all this it would seem not improbable that John had some property, and was better known than any of the other apostles. He was the youngest of the apostles when called, and lived to the greatest age, and is the only one who is supposed to have died a peaceful death. He was called to be a follower of Jesus while engaged with his father and his elder brother James mending their nets at the Sea of Tiberias.

I. Christ, the Eternal Word.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

We see in the start in verse 1 of this account of the Gospel, the words "In the Beginning". This is the same "In the beginning" that is mentioned in Genesis 1:1.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Jesus was there with God the Father and the Holy Spirit when all things were created. The Word, which is mentioned in verse one, is Jesus Christ. Note verse 14 makes that perfectly clear.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The term translated as Word is the Greek (logov) logos. Verse 14 makes it clear in what sense John used it. There it is recorded, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Without question "the Word" is none other than Jesus Christ.

In verse 2, "The same" is direct reference to the Word who was in the beginning with

God.

- (1) The Word was present when the beginning began.
- (2) The Word was in fact God.
- (3) The Word was with God.

What is clear is not only the Deity of Jesus Christ, but also the fact that He is coequal of a plurality within the Godhead.

II. The Work Christ Did before He was Incarnated

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

It is important that we catch that first word of verse 3. ALL things were created by Jesus. That means angels, the earth, man, the universe, etc. etc. This shows us how true and perfect Jesus was. His Deity is beyond question. The Creation was ascribed to Him, and only God can create. Jesus Christ WAS the actual creator.

Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Heb 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Heb 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Heb 1:10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

John 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Jesus Christ, the preexistent Word of God is life. He is the source of life and he is the creator of life. He is the giver of life, both physically and spiritually.

Praise God that through Jesus we have life, and life that never ends. A full complete life here on earth, and an eternal life with the Father when our days end here on earth. (Or Jesus returns in the rapture.) Christ created all things, and one day He will the light in the new city of Jerusalem. There will be no need of the sun anymore, for Jesus will be

the light. Jesus is the fountain of life.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

This life that Jesus gives is eternal life, and Jesus is the light of all men who come to the Father. The darkness of the world cannot understand the light of Jesus Christ. That remains true to this present hour. (John 3:19-20 reinforces the truth found here). Sin abhors light. A great majority of sin and evil are done under the cover of darkness. The darkness of this world hates the light of Jesus Christ. It reveals all too much truth about man.

III. The Ministry of John the Baptist

John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

John 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

John 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

John the Baptist was sent from God. He came to bear witness of the Light, “that all men through him might believe.” The purpose of John’s ministry was to direct men’s attention to the Light. The ultimate goal was for them to believe in the Light of the world. John makes it clear that John the Baptist was “not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.”

We see that John was a man sent from God, one who was prophesied to come.

Mal 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isa 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Even John's birth was announced ahead of time, and his name was chosen by the Lord.

Luke 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Luke 1:57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

Luke 1:58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Luke 1:59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

Luke 1:60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

Luke 1:61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

Luke 1:62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

Luke 1:63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

John the Baptist's purpose was to bear witness of the light. (Christ) He came to bear witness that others might believe. He was the one that came preparing a people for the coming of the Son of God.

IV. Jesus Christ is the True Light

John 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Jesus Christ is not only the true Light but an interesting statement continues. He "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The word translated as lighteth (fwtizw photidzo) is also translated as 'enlightens.' Its parsing is present tense, active voice, indicative mood which implies continual and ongoing action. What is said here clearly is that the light of Jesus Christ, to some degree, has penetrated or will penetrate the heart of every man who has ever set foot upon this planet.

Christ was and is the True Light. He came to give light to every man by paying the way to the Father by shedding His blood that through Him we might live. His purpose in life was to lead a sinless life and die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. All men could be saved if they would believe, but only a few will ever accept Christ as their Personal Savior.

Luke 2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Luke 2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Luke 2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

Luke 2:28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Luke 2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

Luke 2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Luke 2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

Luke 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Simeon had waited for the Messiah, and after he saw Jesus, he said that he was ready to leave this world, for his eyes had seen the Lord's salvation. In verse 10, it says that "He was in the world" which was his 33 years in the flesh.. yet the world truly did not know Him, God in the flesh.

In verse 10, recorded here is some of the greater sorrow of the New Testament. He was in the world, the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. Though not explicit, what seemingly is implied is that the world would not know Him. The world then willfully rejected Him. Nothing has changed to this day.

V. The Believer is Born of God

John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We see in verse 11 that Jesus came first to his own, the Jewish nation, and they refused to accept him. But those few who did believe and accept Him, to him he gave the power to become the sons of God. What an honor.... Do we comprehend the full meaning of this. Joint-Heir with Jesus Christ to the Father. Jesus was the only Begotten Son of God. You and I become sons of God by the new birth.

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

The believer in Christ is not born of blood (of the human stock). The Jews thought that because they were descendents of Abraham they were not in bondage to sin... but Jesus made it clear that all men are guilty of sin.

John 8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

John 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

John 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

John 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

Those that believe in Jesus Christ are born of God. We are sons by adoption. Jesus has granted unto us that authorization upon faith in Him. Believing in Jesus Christ is more than a mere acceptance of the historical and theological facts concerning Him.

This is the first of eighty-six times John uses the word 'believe.' By the conclusion of the

gospel, the simple truth that salvation is by believing in Jesus Christ we will have been established well. The new birth is fundamentally essential and precedes any act of man. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The new birth is not something any human instrumentality or design can accomplish. It is of God. The new birth emanates from God and God alone.

VI. The Incarnation of Christ

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

We see this verse speaking of the birth of Jesus Christ. This was the most miraculous birth that has ever taken place. Jesus was born of a virgin who knew no human man.

We see the first promise of a Messiah to come in Genesis Chapter 3:15.

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Gal 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

We see that when the perfect time came that God had appointed, Christ was born. The incarnation of Jesus is powerfully presented here.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”

The eternally pre-existent Word of God voluntarily took upon Himself a human body. The fact he dwelt among them adds force to the testimony of the disciples. They lived with Him and from personal experience knew Him well. They beheld His glory. The word translated as glory (doxa doxa) has the sense of ‘brilliant light’ to the point of being blinding.

Jesus was not only the light of the world spiritually, on more than one occasion, the disciples saw His physical light (on the mount of transfiguration and the Road to Damascus, for example). His glory revealed Him to be the only begotten of the father. Begotten of the Father ultimately is a reference to the virgin conception of Mary. Jesus Christ is unique in that regard. Our sonship is by adoption. . The term is a reference to the incarnation of Christ.

John Gill pointed out much of the typification from the Old Testament to Christ.

and dwelt among us; or “tabernacled among us”; in allusion to the tabernacle, which was a type of Christ’s human nature: the model of the tabernacle was of God, and not of man; it was coarse without, but full of holy things within; here God dwelt, granted his presence, and his glory was seen; here the sacrifices

were brought, offered, and accepted. So the human nature of Christ was of God's pitching, and not man's; and though it looked mean without, the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in it, as well as a fulness of grace and truth; in the face of Christ the glory of God is seen, and through him, even the veil of his flesh, saints have access unto him, and enjoy his presence; and by him their spiritual sacrifices become acceptable to God: or this is observed, in allusion to the feast of tabernacles, when the Jews dwelt in booths, in remembrance of their manner of living in the wilderness: the feast of tabernacles was typical of Christ, and of his tabernacling in our nature.

Solomon's temple, which was also a type of Christ, was dedicated at the time of that feast; and it seems probable, that our Lord was born at that time; for as he suffered at the time of the passover, which had respect unto him, and the pouring forth of the Spirit was on the very day of Pentecost, which that prefigured; so it is highly probable, that Christ was born at the time of the feast of tabernacles, which pointed out his dwelling among us; and is therefore very pertinently hinted at, when mention is here made of his incarnation.

VII. The Witness of John the Baptist

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 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

The 'John' mentioned here is John the Baptist. There is a rare use of verb tense here. Though the Apostle John wrote more than sixty years later, he used the present tense in writing, John bare witness of him. The thought is how the witness of Christ to this day is ongoing.

Specifically, that witness is, "this is he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me." John the Baptist's reference to Jesus Christ being before him is significant in numerous ways.

(1) Jesus was a second cousin of John the Baptist. From the account in Luke's gospel (Luke 1:36), John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus.

(2) The reference to Jesus being preferred before John and existing before John clearly is a reference to His eternity.

In verse 16, we find a reference to the coming fullness of the Spirit which each of the apostles experienced. The fact His grace flowed from His fullness lends credence to the former. Moreover, they all received "grace for grace" from Him. The word translated as fulness (plhrwma pleroma) may be a reference to the perfection of our Lord.

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

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.

John declared that Christ, who would come after him, born after him, was "before me." John understood the Deity of Jesus Christ. He declares that through Christ we have received grace. Thank the Lord for the time we now live in. John contrasts how the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Grace is that wonderful quality of God emanating from His love.

It is broad in scope, yet simple in its understanding. In its simplest form, grace is the goodness, kindness, and mercy of God towards us. In its broader sense, it also conveys the idea of strength and help from God. It has been defined as 'unmerited favor.' But in its simplicity, it is the wonderful goodness and love of God toward us through Jesus Christ.

Truth, once again is the unchanging, unbending reality of God and His work. It derives ultimately from His holiness. The grace of God and the truth of God are embodied and available in our Lord Jesus Christ. No man has seen God at any time because God is a spirit (John 4:24). Moreover, sinful man can never approach an infinitely holy God.

In various instances recorded in the Scripture, a manifestation was seen but not God Himself (e.g., the burning bush and at Mount Sinai, etc.). The resurrected Christ, now in the bosom of the Father, clearly declared Him throughout His earthly ministry. The word translated as only begotten (monogenhv monogenes) is once again reference to the incarnation (embodiment) of Jesus Christ. It literally means the only-sired-son. It refers to the male aspect of physical conception. Through the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ is referred to as the only begotten Son of God on six occasions.

Jesus Christ, having humbled Himself and endured the cross, has not only been highly exalted, but now also is at the height of endearment by the Father. The deep, pure, love of God the Father to the Son is clearly in view for our benefit.

VIII. Representatives of Pharisees Question John

John 1:19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

John 1:20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

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.

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.

John made it clear who he truly was. Many thought he was the prophet Elijah which was to come before the Messiah took His earthly throne. And John told them that he would have been

Elijah had they received it, but they would not so he was only the voice crying in the wilderness. It should be noted that Elijah will come and stand on this earth again before Jesus takes his earthly throne of David. John made it clear that he was not the Christ, but after him was one coming that was the Son of God. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

John 1:24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

John 1:25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

John was again asked as to who he was. His reply was a direct quotation from Isaiah 40:3.

Isa 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

John indeed was literally “a voice crying in the wilderness.” His ministry was to prepare the way for the Messiah by straightening out the crookedness of the day. Interestingly, Isaiah 40:3 is in the context of the revelation of glory of the Lord. That is not only prophetic of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, but also looks toward the glorious Day of the Lord when Jesus will reign upon His throne forever.

Verse 24 reveals that John’s interrogators were Pharisees. The Pharisees were a sect within Judaism of the day. They were the conservatives and very legalistic in their application of the Law for day-to-day living.

In verse 25, the Pharisees then asked him why he baptized if he were neither Christ, Elijah, or “that prophet.” Curiously, these religious leaders of the day, did not take the position of Deuteronomy 18:15 that Prophet was the Messiah.

Deu 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

John 1:26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

John 1:27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

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

We see the Pharisees coming and questioning John's authority to baptize. It is sad that the very ones least believing Jesus were the so called "religious elite" of the day. Not many who were highly trained in the Mosaic Law recognized Jesus as the Son of God.

John’s reply is simple yet holds a mystery to the Pharisees. Though he baptized with water, “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.” John

obviously refers to the Incarnate One. Though Jesus' ministry had not yet begun, it was imminent. The answer to that statement again is though Jesus was born six months after John, He had eternally preceded him. John realized the greatness of Him. He literally said, 'I am not worthy to untie His shoes.'

These events were near a town called Bethabara which was just east of and adjacent to the Jordan River. There John was baptizing.

IX. Other Testimonies of John concerning Christ

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

The great declaration of John the Baptist concerning Jesus was made the next day. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The Apostle John, more than any other Scriptural writer, describes Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. In fact, excluding one indirect reference to a lamb in I Peter 1:19, John is the only New Testament writer describing Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Clearly, this is a fulfillment of the pictures of Christ in the Passover lamb described in Exodus 12 and of the sin offering of a lamb in Leviticus Ch. 4. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, "taketh away the sin of the world."

The word translated as taketh away (airw *airo*) has a rich meaning. It conveys the idea of taking upon oneself a burden to thus carry it away. It denotes taking up the heavy load upon one's back or shoulders. What a beautiful picture of our Lord as He hung upon the cross, "the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all." He then took our sin and buried it in the deepest sea, as far as the east is from the west.

In verse 30, John the Baptist again reiterated what he said in verse fifteen. He left no doubt that the object of His message was Jesus.

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 1:34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

John saw Jesus for who He was, the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.

Remember when Abraham took Isaac up on Mt. Moriah to offer him as a sin offering? He said that God would provide Himself a Lamb for the burnt offering. That had a two fold meaning, as the Angel stayed Abraham's hand as he raised the knife to slay Isaac. And in the bush was a ram that they offered in Isaac's place. But Jesus was the Lamb offered for the sins of all the world. Thank the Lord for our substitute.

Gen 22:8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

Rev 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

That Lamb of course is the Lord Jesus Christ. John bare record that Jesus was the Son of God.

Twice John confesses, "I knew him not." Here, what John the Baptist evidently is indicating is that at the time he did not know Jesus intimately (though they were second cousins). However, God through His Spirit had evidently revealed to John the following. The One upon whom the Spirit of God descended from heaven like a dove, remaining upon Him, was *the* One. He was the Messiah. He would baptize with the Holy Ghost. Though the baptism of Christ is not explicitly so stated here, each of the other three gospels clearly place the descent of the Spirit as a dove at Jesus' baptism. Here, we read the same.

Matthew's account records that Jesus at His baptism admonished John to baptize Him to fulfill all righteousness. That is, He said it was right. Jesus identified with the message of John—repentance unto the impending kingdom of heaven. Here a simple reason is given for Jesus's baptism. It revealed to John who the Son of God actually was. And He, to that degree, was manifested unto Israel.

The Holy Spirit was portrayed *like* a dove in resting upon Jesus at His baptism. He did not come down *as* a literal dove. Rather, there evidently was a visible manifestation of the Holy Ghost which descended upon Jesus and resembled the flight of a dove in so appearing.

Note the end of verse 33 and the phrase, "baptizeth with the Holy ghost." The word translated as with (en *en*) is also translated as 'by.'

In I Corinthians 12:12-13, the preposition *by* regarding the baptism of the Spirit doesn't mean the Holy Spirit baptizes anyone.

1 Cor 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink

into one Spirit.

X. The Public Ministry of Jesus Christ

John 1:35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

John 1:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

The day after Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist again proclaimed Him to be the Lamb of God. There is added prophetic indication in John's proclamation. This evidently is the third and last glimpse of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist: His baptism, verse 29, and here.

John, no doubt by revelation of the Holy Ghost, clearly foresaw the greater work of Jesus Christ. His initial message had been of Christ as King. It now changed to Christ as sacrificial Lamb. John did not further elaborate in as much as Jesus' ministry was beginning. However, God evidently through the Spirit gave John insight into the ultimate work of Christ—taking away the sin of the world upon the cross as God's sacrificial Lamb.

XI. Andrew and Another Disciple Follow Jesus

John 1:37 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 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.

John 1:40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

We see that John's disciples begin to follow Jesus. They knew who He was, and they were ready to go and follow the Master.

Witnessing what John spoke were two of John's disciples. They both began to follow Jesus. When Jesus asked them for what they sought, they asked Him where he was staying. The term *Rabbi* is a Hebrew term also translated as 'teacher.' It was a term of honor for Jews. These two disciples, in turn, spent the night with Jesus. Of these two, one is named: Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

The name *Andrew* is a Greek name meaning 'masculine' or 'manly.' *Simon Peter* is a hybrid combination of two languages. *Simon* is Hebrew and derives from the Old Testament 'Simeon.' *Peter* is Greek and means 'a stone.' Hence, his name essentially meant, Simon the stone.

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

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.

We see that Andrew brought his own brother, Simon Peter to the Lord. And Jesus calls him to follow after Him. It is noteworthy that one day after coming to Christ, Andrew sought out his brother Simon Peter and brought him to Jesus. Two principles are in view.

(1) Young converts often are most zealous in winning others to Christ.

(2) We ought to begin our witnessing efforts with our own family.

Again, John points out the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *Messias*. It is *Christ* (*Christos* in Greek). Both words essentially mean, 'the Anointed One.' The term finds its roots in how Jewish kings were coronated into office, being anointed with oil according to Old Testament Scripture. Therefore, the term *Christ*, which is more a title than a proper name, has direct reference to Him being King of Israel.

The omniscience of our Lord is seen in verse 42. There is no record that Jesus had ever been introduced to Simon Peter. Though they were from the same region (Peter from Bethsaida and Jesus from Nazareth) there is no indication they had ever met. Nevertheless, Jesus immediately mentioned his lineage, "the son of Jona." He went on to inform Peter how he also would be called *Cephas*. Peter is a Greek word. *Cephas* is an Aramaic word. It, like Peter, means a 'stone.'

XII. Philip and Nathanael Called

John 1:43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

John 1:44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

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.

We see that Philip is called to follow the Lord, and he goes and finds Nathanael. He declares that they have found the one that Moses wrote about in the law.

The following day, Jesus started back to Galilee, His home area. In the process, "he findeth Philip." His message is as simple as it is forceful. He said, "Follow me." The essence of discipleship is following Jesus. It is more than mere belief. All disciples are believers, but not all believers are disciples. Moreover, Jesus' call to Philip was an imperative. He essentially commanded Philip to follow Him. It may well be inferred that discipleship is not an option, but a command.

In verse 44, Philip, Andrew, Peter, and John the apostle all came from *Bethsaida*. It was a small fishing village along the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It literally means 'house of fish' in Hebrew. This makes sense in as much as each of these first four disciples were fishermen. Evidently, the village's local economy was based upon the commercial fishing of Galilee. In verse 45, Philip in turn forthwith found his friend Nathanael and told him, "*We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*"

There is an evident excitement as Philip informs Nathanael, they had found the Christ. The name *Nathanael* is Hebrew and has the sense, 'gift of God.' In all likelihood, he also is called Bartholomew in the other gospels. (Curiously, Nathanael is not found in the other gospels, and Bartholomew is not found in John.) He hailed from Cana of Galilee, which was nearby.

The reference to "Moses . . . and the prophets" was a phrase the Jews of the day had for referring to what we today call the Old Testament.

Essentially, Philip proclaimed to Nathanael, we have found the One the entire Bible speaks of. (The only Bible then, of course, was the Old Testament.) Though the Apostle John had made clear in verse 18 that Jesus was the only begotten of God, Philip no doubt as yet was not aware of that. Moreover, he only knew Jesus as Joseph's son. There is therefore no lessening of the greater truth of the virgin birth or the Deity of Christ. John only records Philip's excitement as a new convert.

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

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.

Nathanael was unimpressed. He said, "*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth.*" His scorn and sarcasm may have stemmed from local rivalry. Nevertheless, Nathanael was not overwhelmed when first witnessed to by Philip. Philip did not argue. He simply said, "Come and see." The word translated as see (eidw *eido*) refers not so much to physical sight as to overall knowledge or perception.

As Nathanael approached Jesus, Jesus said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" The thought is, here was a true Israelite—one who was honest. In verse 48, Nathanael, upon hearing this, was taken aback and asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" He in effect asked Jesus, 'How do you know me?'

Jesus, again revealing His omniscience, informed Nathanael that before Philip called him while he was sitting under a fig tree, He saw him. Not only did Jesus see him earlier sitting under a tree, He also saw his heart. Only God can do that! Again, the Deity of our

Lord is clear.

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

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.

See that Nathanael questions the morals of Jesus since he came from Nazareth. Philip's answer to the question is for him "to come and see." That is good advice when we look or need to prove something. God will reveal the truth if we will go and see and seek the Lord about the truth of a matter. And many spirits in the world today are not of God.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 John 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

Jesus proved to Nathanael that he was God by His answer. Something that went on under the fig tree was only known by God and Nathanael. That was enough for Nathanael. He immediately confessed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

In perceiving the omniscience of Jesus, he realized that He indeed was the long-prophesied Son of God. He understood the implication of that. He also was the long awaited King of Israel. He was the Christ!

Jesus in effect replied, you will see greater things than these. Jesus then proceeded to inform Nathanael that he would later see "heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." There is no recorded instance in the New Testament of such an event having taken place. What may be in view, however, is a prophetic reference to events in the yet-to-come kingdom of God. The word translated as upon (*epi epi*) can also be translated as 'to' or 'by.' Hence, the sense may be that someday Nathanael would have the privilege of witnessing the angels of God ascending and descending to or by Jesus.

It may be when He is seated upon His throne in His kingdom. Interestingly, in Jacob's ladder-dream (Genesis 28:12), he saw angels of God ascending and descending from heaven. Perhaps God gave Jacob a prophetic preview of what evidently is a kingdom event. It is also noteworthy that Jesus, for the first time in John's gospel, calls himself "the Son of man."

What clearly and forcefully has been established earlier in the chapter is that Jesus is the eternal Son of God. Now, the other side of His divine person is presented. He also is

the son of man. Jesus Christ, is both God and yet man. As Son of man, He would undergo in all ways the human experience. As Son of man, He would die with and for our sin as our Substitute. As Son of man, would rise from the grave in a glorified body. As Son of man, He will someday sit upon the throne of David as King over all the earth.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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