

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

114- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 11
Bartholomew- Part 1

Church October 06, 2024

Matthew 10:1-4

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now we have been “camping out” on this Passage for a number of weeks because we are looking at each of the men whom Jesus chose to be His Apostles. And we have already studied the first *five* men- the two sets of brothers- Peter and Andrew; and James and John. And then last time- we looked at Philip.

Now the *first* thing that I pray that you take with you from this Sermon series is that the Lord selects very normal, everyday men for a Calling that was NOT normal at all. Being an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ was the *highest* Calling that any person could ever have. And yet, those men are such normal, everyday people. And I pray that this has given you all great Encouragement for the Lord's Grace in your own Lives.

And the *second* thing I want you to take with you from this Series- is that these are the men, whom God used to change the World. Over 3,500 years ago, God “moved” on a man named, Moses, to be the *first* man to write down the Words of God. Before Moses, the Story of Creation and men from Adam to Joseph were handed down from one Generation to the next through a Process called, “Word of Mouth”. Each Father would teach his Children what God had done-

sovereignly (Creation) and how He had “moved” in and through the Lives of the Patriarchs.

But when Moses met God on Mount Sinai- that all changed. And Moses wrote down the Inspired; Inerrant; and Infallible Word of the living God in the first five Books of the Hebrew Bible. And then Samuel and then Ezra and then other men- some Prophets; some Priests were used by God to write an additional 34 Books.

And those 39 *unique* and *special* Books were unlike any other Writings on earth. And they represented ALL that God desired His people to know at that Time. And the first five Books of Moses- the “Torah” became known as the “didactic Books”- which taught what Obedience to God and personal Holiness looked like under this first Covenant. So, anyone who wanted to please God and bring Glory to Him prayed and sought God and strove to obey what God had given to Moses and what he had infallibly written down.

And that’s the Way it was until Jesus chose the men, who He called, “Apostles”- Jesus’ own personal “Shaliah”- those chosen to be given the very SAME Message of the Kingdom of Heaven (as opposed to the Kingdom of Israel) that Jesus Himself taught; and who would verify the Divine Credibility of that Message by also being given the very SAME Power and Authority that Jesus Himself demonstrated.

And the Apostle Levi or Matthew, the former tax-Collector; the Apostle John; along with the Apostle Peter’s scribe (John Mark); and the Apostle Paul’s personal Physician (Dr. Luke) were “moved on” by God the Holy Spirit to pen down the four written “*Stories*”; or the “*Records*”; or the “*Accounts*” of the “*Good News*” of Salvation through the Birth; Life; Ministry; Death; Resurrection; and Ascension of Jesus, the Christ; the Son of God; the long-awaited Messiah; Immanuel; and the Minister of the infinitely superior New Covenant! And those men wrote down those four Gospel Records in the SAME Way that Moses wrote his five Books- through the “*Gift of Inspiration*”.

But from around 44AD to the End of the 1st Century, an *additional 23* Books were given to the Church by God- including 21 “Letters” or “Epistles”; one “Prophecy” of the final Victory of Jesus; and a “Diary” of the first 30 years of the Christian Church.

The Point that I am making is that Who Jesus is and what Jesus did- *as articulated by the Teachings of the Apostles*- is what God used to bring the *first* or the Old Covenant to a decisive End. And it is also what brought the infinitely *superior* New Covenant into Existence.

And when that happened- the 21 Epistles *replaced* the first five Books of Moses as the “*didactic*” or the “*Teaching Books*” of the New Covenant. And so,

EVERYTHING we do today to glorify God- as well as who can lead in the Church is contained in the Teaching from the Apostles.

But as we continue to look at the Apostles- I want to go backward into the Old Testament for just a moment of Introduction. And as we do that- we see two of the most honored men in all of Old Testament History. And these two men- more than any other- are the men who *symbolize* the entire Old Testament- which was also called, the “*Law and the Prophets*”. And those two men are Moses and Elijah.

Moses, of course was the great Leader and Lawgiver of Israel and Elijah was the great Prophet of God. And these two men are so singularly blessed as to have appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration as recorded in the New Testament Account. So, they symbolize Power; Preaching; and Leadership.

Now Moses was the Nation of Israel’s *first* great Leader- the “Commander-in-Chief” of the Exodus. And he is the one who was leading Israel when the entire army of Egypt was destroyed. And Moses received the Law of God. He heard God speak to him personally in the burning bush. Moses was on the Mount to see the glory of God. Moses was given the Tablets of Stone upon which God had written with His own Finger the Ten Commandments. Moses wrote the first five Books of Scripture called the Torah, the Law, the Pentateuch. Moses was the Leader of Israel during the 40 years of Wandering before they entered the Land of Canaan. So, this man is identified forever with the Law of God and with Israel.

And yet, Moses was an orphan of slave parents in a foreign land. Moses had a speech impediment that bothered him so much that he did everything in his power to turn down God’s Call on his Life and tried to tell the Lord he was not the best Choice to be a Leader.

Moses feared his Task. Moses was prone to great and explosive Anger. Moses had a flare for dramatic Display. Moses was a Murderer- just like the Apostle Paul. And Moses sometimes doubted God and was tempted, on occasion, to bring Glory to himself.

Moses was a man with many and great Flaws- the kind of Flaws that all people have- who was, nevertheless, used mightily by God and was uniquely identified by God Himself like this in **Numbers 12:1-8**:

1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman);
2 and they said, “Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?” And the Lord heard it.
3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)

4 Suddenly the Lord said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, “You three come out to the tent of meeting.” So the three of them came out.

5 Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent, and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward,

6 He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream.

7 “Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household;

8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?”

And then there is Elijah- who represents all the OT Prophets. And Elijah was used by God in performing breathtaking Miracles and of rescuing the Nation of Israel from Idolatry and an evil King.

But I want you to turn with me to the **Epistle of James** and let’s see what James says about this man named Elijah. Please turn with me to **James 5:17&18:**

17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

So, the *first* Pastor of the Church in Jerusalem said here that Elijah was a man with a weak and frail human Nature- just like ours. In other words- James was saying that Elijah was not some kind of “superman” who was *immune* to the “ups and downs” of Life but that this great Prophet went through Turmoil and Struggle and Doubt- just like we do.

Now according to **1Kings 17:18-** Elijah was a “**man of God**”. And the Bible says that Elijah was a Preacher- in fact- he was one of the *greatest* Preachers that there ever was. He was also a miracle Worker. Elijah was one whom God graced to be able to raise the dead- and did so. He called down fire on a hundred of King Ahaziah's men and he slew, with his own hands- the 450 false prophets of Baal- cutting their heads off down by the river. So, Elijah was a great Prophet and a great man of supernatural and dynamic Ability.

And yet this great man demonstrated the most bizarre kind of Fear and Despair when confronted by a powerful pagan woman by the name of Jezebel- who threatened his Life. And in response- Elijah wound up running into the

Wilderness to hide in Fear and feel sorry for himself by hiding in a cave and saying, "*I, only I am left,*" and didn't recognize there were at that time- 7,000 others who had not compromised with Baal in the land of Israel.

So, in spite of all his great Accomplishments- Elijah was a man who was so depressed; and in such Despair- that he asked God to take his Life- his own Faith had reached such a low ebb. And yet God was Good to Elijah and did NOT take his Life- in fact Elijah didn't die at all because God provided his own "private Rapture" and he was taken to Heaven in a Whirlwind.

So, was Elijah flawed? Sure. But after all- we're all flawed. We're all Fallen. We all bear the Mark of the Divine Curse; and we are all Sinners. And so, if God is going to use any human being- He must use one who is flawed; who is not perfect; and one who has very serious Troubles and Obstacles in his Life or else God can't use any human being at all.

So, God uses very ordinary men for a Calling that is anything but Ordinary. And Jesus picks right up on that here in the NT as He is choosing twelve very flawed and unworthy men to lead the Church; and to establish the Christian Church on the earth; and to receive and articulate and write down the final, full, and completed Revelation of God to Man which is the 27 Books of the NT.

Now remember, the Disciples, who became Apostles, are divided into three Groups of four men each. The lists of these twelve men are found in **Matthew, Mark, Luke** and **The Acts**. And the first Name is always the same- Peter. And then everybody appears in the same Group of four. The Names may be mingled around but everybody stays in his own Group. And the Name at the beginning of each Group is always the same- indicating that each of the three Groups had a set Leader and that Peter was the Leader over all of them.

Now we've already met Group #1- Peter, James, John and Andrew. And last time we met the Leader of Group #2- who was Philip. And we found Philip to be skeptical- kind of the "bean- counter" of the Apostles. He wasn't too strong in Faith with regard to the Supernatural and he tended to deal with only material Things. Philip had to see it and wanted it in his hands. He was the one who was Analytical; Pessimistic; Reluctant; Unsure; and very slow to believe and trust. His Faith tended to be limited by Circumstances, Money, Rules, and Proof. But in the end- God- by His Grace- overcame all of that in Philip and he became a great Apostle- ultimately dying as a faithful Martyr.

And so, that brings us to number six in the list of the Twelve. And his Name is given here in verse 3 as, "*Bartholomew*". And Bartholomew was also known as, "*Nathanael*". In fact, many Church Historians said that his Name was actually, "*Nathanael- Bartholomew*".

Now let me show you how this worked. Many of you realize that the Bible was NOT written originally in English. And so, there are Names in the Bible-

Names of people as well as Names of cities- even Names of Groups- that have been “*transliterated*” into English over the Centuries. Now a “*transliteration*” is different from a “*translation*”. A “*translation*” takes a word from another Language and brings it into a corresponding word in another Language.

But a “*transliteration*” takes a Word from one Language and brings it into the nearest sounding word in another Language. So, while a translation would be very accurate- the writers may actually invent a word that sounds similar to the word that is being transliterated.

For example, back when the King James Version of the Bible was being produced, **The Acts 1:13** listed the Name of one of the Apostles as, “**Simon Zelotes**”- giving the Impression that “*Zelotes*” was Simon’s last Name or Family Name. But the Name, “*Zelotes*” is actually a “*transliteration*” of a religious Group that operated in Israel during the 1st Century, called, the “*Zealots*”. And the Zealots were the first Jewish Terrorist Organization- who committed all sorts of heinous Evils against people- all “in the Name of” restoring the “Promised Land” back to the Jews. So, instead of his Name being *transliterated* as “*Simon Zelotes*”- the newer English Versions have fixed that Issue and have correctly *translated* this man’s Name as, “*Simon, the Zealot*”.

And this is what happened to the Apostle named, “*Nathanael-Barthlomew*”. The Hebrew Name, “*Mattanah*” means: “a Gift” and “*El*” means: God from, “*Elohim*”. So, Nathanael’s original Hebrew Name was, “*Mattanah-El*” means: “*Gift of God*” or “*Gift from God*”. And, over the Centuries, “*Mattanah-El*” was *transliterated* into English as, “*Nathanael*”.

And the same thing happened to the Name, “*Barthlomew*”. The name, “*Bartholomew*” comes from two Hebrew words, “*bar*” and “*Tolmai*”- which literally means, “*son of Tolmai*.” “*Bar*” means “*son of*,” so, for Example, a “*Bar-mitzvah*” is when a young Jewish man becomes a “*Son of the Law*”. And so, “*Bar-Tolmai*” means: the “*son of Tolmai*”. And this is why Nathaneal is sometimes called, “*Mattanah-El- bar Tomai*”- or “*Mattanah-El- the son of Tolmai*”.

But the name, “*Tolmai*” may itself be an Aramaic *transliteration* of an ancient Greek name of “*Ptolemy*”. Now Ptolemy I Soter (Ptolemy the Savior) was a Macedonian general under Alexander the Great, who was the Ruler of Egypt (323-283BC) and Founder of the Ptolemaic Empire from where Cleopatra was born.¹ And Ptolemy I took the role of “King of all Egypt” in 305 BC. And those who came after him were called, “*the Ptolemies*”.

So, when they *transliterated* “*Mattanah-El*”- it became “*Nathanael*” and when they *transliterated* “*Bar-Tolmai*” (Bar-Ptolemy)- it became, “*Barthlomew*”. So, this Apostle’s actual Name was, “*Mattanah-El-Bar Tolmai*”- which could mean he was Mattanah-El, who was one of the ancestors of the Ptolemies.

¹ Cleopatra was NOT Egyptian, but a descendant of the Greek Ptolemies

But there's yet another Possibility. There were among the Hebrews of the 1st Century- a small religious Sect called, the “*Tolmaians*”- because their Leader was a man named, “*Tolmai*”. And this Sect was devoted to the study of the OT Scripture. And they gave much attention to the Scriptures.

So, “*Mattanah-El bar-Tolmai*” might have simply been the son of a man named, “*Tolmai*”; or he might have been a part of this 1st Century Jewish sect called, the “*Tolmaians*”; or he was the son of a Member. Either one would have made Nathanael very knowledgeable in the Scriptures.

John 21:2 identifies him as being from Cana in Galilee- which was really very, very close, in a short walking distance, from Nazareth. And somehow, Nathanael and Philip had become friends. And Nathanael was brought to Jesus by Philip, and so, every time you see the listing of the Apostles- Philip and Nathanael or Philip and Bartholomew are always linked together. So, they were very close through the years of their Journey with Christ- not unlike Peter and Andrew- who were together as brothers and James and John who were together as brothers.

So even though Philip and Nathanael were not brothers- they were very close Companions and in all the listings of the Apostles they're identified alongside each other.

Now let's meet Mattanah-El bar- Tolmai by looking at **John 1:43-** and this is the only place where he's identified in the entire New Testament.

Verse 43 picks up the story of Jesus in the time in which He was calling His disciples. John the Baptist had pointed to Christ as being the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world and the Ministry of Jesus then officially began. And so, Jesus called Simon and Andrew, in the prior passage to be His Disciples. And later on, these two men would become Apostles. But at this point- Jesus just called them to be His Disciples. And then on the very next day after He had done that- Jesus purposed to go into Galilee and He found Philip. And He said to Philip, "*Follow Me.*"

Now Philip is identified as being from Bethsaida- the city of Andrew and Peter- and he probably knew them very well and probably attended the same synagogue with them and knew them to be followers of the one true living God and lovers of God- with a Messianic hope they all had very much in common.

So, all of these guys were genuine believers of the true God and they were desirous of the coming of the Messiah and they followed Jesus- trusting Him to be that Messiah to whom they had waited.

Now after all this- Philip, it says in verse 45, found Nathanael. So, by this we know that these two men were Acquaintances- but we don't know what that Acquaintance was all about. We don't know whether it was a professional one or a

family one or whether it was just social or spiritual- but whatever their Association was- Philip found Nathanael.

And the implication here is that Philip knew Nathaniel and because they already knew each other- as soon as Philip met Jesus- he *immediately* went and pursued Nathanael because he wanted to tell him what he himself had discovered concerning the Messiah.

So, Nathanael was found by Philip after Philip was found by the Lord Himself. So obviously, God was sovereignly overruling any Circumstances that would cause any other Finding to take place so that what happened was His perfect Will. So, it was the Will of God that Philip pursue Nathanael and bring him to Jesus, which is *exactly* what he did.

Now Philip's Conversation with Nathanael gives us some introduction to what kind of a guy he was. Look at the last part of **John 1:45** :

We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

So, this is the first bit of Information that we have about Nathanael. Obviously, Philip knows that what matters to Nathanael the most is what the Scripture says. Philip knows his friend Nathanael and he knows that Nathanael views everything from the Scripture's standpoint. And so, when Philip goes to him to introduce the Messiah that has found him- Philip does so from the standpoint of Old Testament Prophecy.

Now this is to indicate to us that Nathanael and Philip together were both Students of the Old Testament. Philip didn't approach Nathaniel with, "*Hey, I just found a Man who has a wonderful Plan for your Life.*" He doesn't say, "*Hey Nathanael- I just found a man who will fix your Marriage; or heal your body; or make you happy about yourself; or bring you lots of Money and material Goods into your Life; or give you a new Chariot.*"

Philip doesn't say any of those kinds of things that might appeal to the baser element of Nathanael's Personality. He simply hits him where he lives and in a Way that mattered the most to him, "*Hey Nathaniel, we **have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.***"

And the phrase, "the Law and the Prophets" that Philip used here refers to the 39 Books of the Old Testament- which evidently both Philip and Nathanael had been studying.

So, this Statement by Philip shows us that Nathanael was a Student of Scripture. Nathanael sought to know and to understand the one true living God

through the Word of God and not by mystical Means; or through esoteric Efforts; or through his own personal Experiences- as so many people do in our Day.

Nathanael did not seek God through Dreams, Visions, or through angelic Visitations, or having God speak individually to him. Nathanael was not traveling all over the Country following some Self- appointed and Unaccountable “Prophet” trying to get a “Word from God” like so many do in our Day. Nathanael didn’t place his hand on the TV to feel the Power of God coming from the TV Preacher. Nathanael didn’t send in “Seed Offerings” or get a genuine page from an original King James Version Bible by sending in a “love gift” \$2500 or more to the shyster. Nathanael didn’t have a bottle of oil from Gethsemane; or a bottle of water from the River Jordan; or a prayer cloth or a statue of the Virgin Mary that cries genuine tears in blood; or any other religious trinket to channel the Spirit of God through.

Nathanael was not following the “inner Voice” inside him; or an audible Voice in his ear; or any other Voice. Nathanael didn’t know or understand or seek after God through Signs or Wonders or Miracles or because 1st Lady Salena or Prophet McIntyre at 1-800 get-rich-quick sent him his own “personal Prophecy”.

Nathanael sought after the one true living God and sought to know and understand God through the Pages of inspired Scripture and through Scripture alone. Nathanael so highly respected and valued the Words that God had breathed out- that He dedicated his Time to study them; and to know them; and to understand them.

Nathanael sought after Divine Truth; and he knew that there was only one place in all the Universe to find Divine Truth and that was through the inspired and inerrant and infallible Words of Scripture.

And this tells us two very important things. First of all- it tells us that a correct and full Understanding of what the OT Scriptures actually say will always- and in all cases- lead a person to Salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said that everything in found in the Words of the OT was about Him. And so, if you are reading the OT and you get any other Meaning other than that Salvation is through the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ- then you are not reading and understanding the OT correctly.

There is no such thing as reading and studying the OT and not coming to the Conclusion that Salvation is NOT obtained through Obedience to the Law but is found only through Faith in the Life and the Death and the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was God in human flesh; and Who lived a perfectly sinless Life; and Who will come again as conquering King to Judge the world in Righteousness! That is the entire and the full Message of the OT.

The second Thing that we get from this issue with Nathanael is that the very best Way to win souls is to get lost people to study the Bible. Now I fully realize that it is hard to get saved people to actually read and study the Bible these Days-

but here, a lost man, who was chosen by God for Salvation, comes to Christ based solely on his Study of Scripture. So, we need to get lost people in front of the Bible on an ongoing basis; and we can do that through the faithful Preaching of the Word of God and through establishing Bible Studies with our friends and co-workers and fellow students and relatives.

Remember- nobody gets saved unless and until they hear the Gospel preached. You can feed them all you want; and you can invite movie stars; and Hollywood actors; and sports stars; to draw a crowd. You can give them your personal Testimony; and you can talk about how great things God has done in your Life; and how much you love Jesus; and all of that is just peachy keen.

But unless and until lost people hear the Gospel preached- they will never be saved. So preaching and teaching the Gospel to as many people as we can using every Means and Technology that we can- the internet; TV, radio, Books passing out tracts; going to the jails and the nursing homes and street witnessing and inviting people to Church and over to your house to have a Bible Study- *that* should be the main Focus of the Church of Jesus- *that* is what we need to focus on- *that* is where the majority of our time and energy and money should be directed- and *that* is where our Prayers need to be focused on.

What we should NOT be wasting Money and Time on- is in trying to “Transform the Culture” (whatever that means) and not in electing more Conservatives or Republicans to Office; and not in campaigning to repeal National Health Insurance; and not by the Church of Jesus getting hip deep in Politics and the Affairs of this Life; and not in trying to obtaining more of this world’s Goods; and not in becoming Covetous and Self- fulfilled.

Knowing and understanding and loving and obeying the one true living God through the Power of the risen Christ through reading and studying and knowing and understanding and loving and obeying the Divine Truth of Scripture should be the Focus and the Delight and the Pleasure and the Goal of every single believer in every single Church.

And I really believe that with the exception of Judas Iscariot- all of the Apostles were students of the Divine Truth found in Scripture. And that is the same thing as saying that their hearts were right before God. They were sincere in their Love for God and in their Desire to know the Truth; and to know the Messiah.

And so, in that sense- they were very different from the religious Establishment which was dominated by the Hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But these men were the real deal. And so, Philip finds his close friend, Nathanael or Bartholomew and he tells him, *"We have found the one about whom we have studied about in the Scriptures for so long."*

So, there is no doubt in my mind that these two men had spent long hours in the Scriptures. Very likely they had searched the Law and the Prophets to discern

the Truth about the coming of Messiah. And it was really because Nathanael was so well trained in the Scriptures- perhaps even better than Philip- that he was so immediate in his Response to Jesus.

What we have to understand my Friends is that Nathanael was able to recognize Jesus so clearly and so quickly and so easily because he had such a clear understanding of what the Scripture said about Him. He knew what the Promises about the Messiah were; and so, he knew what the Fulfillment would look like. He knew Him of whom Moses and the Prophets had written. And when He showed up- not immediately upon the first Introduction of Philip- but immediately upon the first Introduction of Jesus- he recognized Him.

So, Philip says to him, here's the amazing part at the end of verse 45-

... Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathanael- the Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth- the Son of Joseph!

Now the phrase, "*Son of Joseph*" was how you identified people back then and that is where you get names like, Josephson, or Albertson, or any other of those kinds of names that find their way through Anglo language- which identifies someone as the son of someone else.

Your last Name is an Identifier with your Family- it mostly is supposed to link you with your Father or the Father of your Husband. That's the Idea behind it. You didn't just pop up out of the cabbage patch- you have a family History and you are the "son" of someone else.

And that is precisely why radical Feminism along with the weak and emasculated men who agree with it- seek to change all that- because they despise Male Headship and Male Leadership.

So, I pray that no female child of God will ever be guilty of not taking your husband's last Name when you marry or that you hyphenate your last Name or that you go by the title, "MS" rather than "Miss" when your single and "Mrs." when you're married because all of that is from the radical feminist Agenda which is- as I have taught you well- the modern day Revival of the ancient heresy of godless Gnosticism.

For 6,000 years- since the beginning of Time- people have been identified by the Father's Name. And so, this man named, Jesus which may have been a very common name back then- it is Joshua in the Greek and Y'shua from the Hebrew- this Jesus- who is as far as human Linage goes- is the Son of Joseph- and he is from the town of Nazareth. That is how Philip described Him to Nathanael.

Now this statement by Philip does not in any way contradict the fact that God was Jesus' Father; and that Jesus was fully and truly Deity. Philip was simply explaining in human terms who he was talking about to Nathanael.

And there had to be a certain amount of Surprise even in the voice of Philip as he was saying, *"You'll never believe this, Nathanael- the Messiah is actually the Son of Joseph- a man named Jesus from over in Nazareth."*

And in verse 46- we get a little insight into Nathanael's frail and weak and sinful Character. That even though Nathanael was a great Student of Scripture- he was just flat- out biased and bigoted against people who came from the "wrong side of the tracks" because he responds to Philip's excited statement by saying,

... Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?...

Now that, folks, is just plain old- fashioned Prejudice. If Nathaniel had said, *"But Philip- as you know from our Study of Scripture- the Prophet, Micah says that the Messiah has to come from Bethlehem- and not Nazareth."* then we would have known that all that Nathaniel meant by that Statement is that the Scriptures didn't say that the Messiah was supposed to come from Nazareth. Or he could have said, *"But, Philip, the Scriptures say that the true Messiah is going to be identified with Jerusalem because He's going to reign in Jerusalem."*

He could have even said, *"Philip, this is impossible, the Messiah can't come from Nazareth."* But he didn't say anything like that. What Nathaniel did say was,

... Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?...

And that is a general Statement that manifests a deep- seated Prejudice inside Nathanael. That Statement is not Rational- it's just pure Emotional. Now what compounds the Problem is that Nathanael himself didn't live in such a hot town either. He was from the city of Cana- and unless you were looking for the house where Jesus turned water into wine- you would never go there.

Now Cana was within walking distance from Nazareth- but it was off the beaten track. But Nazareth was a major crossroads. So, if you go north and south in Israel- you go through Nazareth. If you're going up the Coast of Israel- you eventually get into Galilee and you go through Nazareth as you head forward to eat, sleep and get supplies. And if you're going from East to West- you're also going to go through Nazareth- very likely coming from the East heading toward the Mediterranean.

So, Nazareth was a major Crossroads; and it was a very *rough* town- a very *unrefined* town- a *brutal* town. And from what I read- it is still the same today. Nazareth is not a picturesque kind of place. It has a nice visual setting on the slopes of the hills up there in Galilee, but it's not a memorable town today and it wasn't in those Days either.

Now back in that Day- the Galileans looked down their noses on the Nazarenes and the Galileans really looked down their noses on the Nazarenes. They just didn't like them. They considered them to be low Class people; and they had developed a deep-seated Prejudice against them.

And as we read through this- you get this idea that God finds some Pleasure by having His people come from the most despised locations on earth so that essentially, they have nothing going for them, except that they're used to transform the world. And in the end- the only Explanation to that is God, so He gets all the Glory.

So based on all that Bias and Prejudice- it was inconceivable to Nathanael Bartholomew that the Messiah would come out of that tacky place called Nazareth, that rough, evil, sinful, and corrupt Place. And it would have been fine if he had said, "*But Philip- Nazareth is such an evil Place,*" but for him to say- "*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" is just plain Prejudice.

And Prejudice is always a very ugly thing. It's an uncalled- for Generalization based on sinful Feelings of Superiority and not based in Fact. It feeds the Self- righteous and Arrogance of human Pride and Prejudice and is very effective in cutting people off from the Truth. In fact, I suppose in one sense we could say that the whole Nation of Israel rejected their God sent Messiah because of Prejudice. They just couldn't bring themselves to believe that their Messiah should come out of Nazareth either. They didn't believe that their Messiah and all of His Apostles could come out of Galilee. And they mocked the Apostles as being uneducated and unsophisticated Galileans. They didn't like the fact that Jesus spoke against the religious Establishment; and they despised the fact that Jesus told them to love the pagan Romans and to do Good to them and forgive them.

And so, from the religious Leaders on down to the "*hoi polloi*"- the people sitting in the Synagogue, it was their prideful and Self- righteous Prejudice that caused them to reject Jesus- even in His own town as we learned back in **Luke 4**.

Yet God commands all who are saved to not only believe in Jesus- but to love Him; and to obey Him; and to follow after Him; and to trust their souls to Him- even though He didn't match up with this great "Warrior-King" picture of the Messiah that the 1st Century Jews had fabricated.

Because in their own sinful Self-righteousness- the overwhelming majority of the Jews of the 1st Century- were NOT looking for a "Messiah-Savior"- who would rescue them from the Wrath of God against their Sins. They were so drenched in their deep-seated Hatred of the occupying Romans- that they were looking for a military Leader and a Politician- who would forcefully evict the pagan Gentiles from their Land; secondly, reclaim all of the dispersed Jews who

had fled to other Nations; and then raise up an Army that would go forth to conquer the Lands of the Gentiles so that this Messiah could rule the world from Jerusalem.

But that was NEVER the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. And even though this same Arrogance is alive and well today- those who study the Scriptures like Nathanael Barthlomew know that the *fulfillment* of the Abrahamic Covenant is found in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The “Habitation of Peace” is the Church; and the “Promised Land” is Heaven!

And so, the Spirit of the living God is traveling on the Wings of the Gospel to every Nation under Heaven. And He is drawing all of God’s elect from every Nation and Tribe and Tongue! And they will all be counted as the Family of God-washed; forgiven; made Righteous; and adopted! And in this Family- the Church- those who lead will serve and there will be a Removal of all deep-seated Prejudices and Biases and Hatred from the Heart of every genuine Believer- and the invincible Church of the Lord Christ will shine forth in the Splendor of the Father- having made Herself Ready for her coming King!

Amen. Let’s pray!

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your Pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.