



Who do YOU say Jesus is? John 1:43-51

This one question has sparked more literature, debates, sermons, and changed lives than any other issue. There are a lot of different ideas about who Jesus is and who He claimed to be. But, who do YOU say Jesus is?

John 1:43-45 (CSB) ⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and told him, **“Follow me.”** ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, **“We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.”**

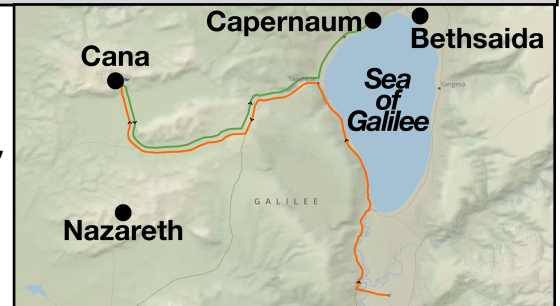
Follow me is an invitation to go where Jesus goes, watch and listen to what He says, and learn to act and react the way that He does. **You are not a Christian if you refuse to follow Him!**

Philip (Greek name *“horse lover”*) was from **Bethsaida** (*“house of fishing”*), where Andrew and Simon Peter were from.

Philip found Nathanael and told him...about Jesus.

- **Nathanael** (Hebrew name *“gift from God”*) was from **Cana** (John 21:2),
- **We have found the one Moses and the prophets wrote about!**

This is no small find! The Jewish people have been looking and searching for this promised Messiah, and these men think they have actually met Him! But Nathanael doesn't buy in that quick.



John 1:46 **“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”** Nathanael asked him. **“Come and see,”** Philip answered.

Nathanael can't fathom that the Messiah was from, of all places, **Nazareth**. Nathanael is from **Cana**, and evidently the people of Cana didn't think much of nearby **Nazareth**. Nathanael just can't buy the idea of the Messiah coming from THAT PLACE! He could see the Messiah coming from:

- Jerusalem - the capital city where God's temple stands
- Bethlehem - home of King David
- But Nazareth? Nope.

Philip's response? **Come and see** for yourself!

John 1:47 Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, **“Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”**

This is an interesting phrase a play on words. **Israelites were descendants of Jacob, who God later renamed “Israel”** (Gen. 35:10). Jacob's name describes who he became, a *“cheater/deceiver”* (Gen. 27:36).

- **Jacob deceived his brother, Esau**, into giving away his **birthright** (Gen. 25:27-34), receiving a double portion of whatever was passed down to other children (see Deut. 21:17).
- **Jacob deceived his father, Isaac**, into giving him the **blessing** that his father intended to give to Esau. Jacob even wore Esau's clothes & put on skin of young goats on his hands & neck to fool his poor sighted father (Gen. 27). Isaac pronounced that Jacob (whom he thought was Esau) should be the *master over his relatives, other nations bow down to him, blessing to those who bless him and cursing to those who curse him* (Genesis 27:28-29).

When Esau found out that his blessing had been stolen, Esau went after Jacob, the deceiver. It was during that time that God humbled the deceiver and renamed him *“Israel”*. So God transformed his name & his character.

Nathanael was a descendant of Jacob/Israel, **an Israelite in whom there is no deceit**, or as one commentator says, *“an Israelite in whom there is no Jacob [deceit].”*¹

YOUR NOTES

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *John: That You May Believe, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 51.

John 1:48-49 ⁴⁸“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you,” Jesus answered. ⁴⁹“Rabbi,” Nathanael replied, “**You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!**”

How can Jesus really know the character of Nathanael? Nathanael has never seen or much less, met Jesus before. To that question Jesus says, “*Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.*” That simple statement so impressed Nathanael that he changed his tune from “Does anything good come from Nazareth” to recognizing this **rabbi** from Nazareth as the **Son of God** and **King of Israel**.

Why would Nathanael be convinced by Jesus for seeing him **under the fig tree**?

- Jews would frequently find a quiet place, away from other people, to pray and meditate on the Scriptures.
- NO ONE was near Nathanael while he met with God under the fig tree. So, Jesus must have seen Nathaniel from a GREAT distance...an impossible distance for human eyes.
- Nathanael recognizes this MUST be...the **Son of God** and **King of Israel**.

John 1:50-51 ⁵⁰ Jesus responded to him, “Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.” ⁵¹ Then he said, “Truly [truly] I tell you, **you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.**”

A true Israelite, as Nathanael was, would recognize this as a reference to Jacob's dream in **Gen. 28:10-12**, where Jacob (later called Israel) saw angels of God ascending and descending on a stairway reaching from the ground into the sky. When Jacob awoke he called this place “BethEl” (house of God), the PLACE where God met with man. That was just a shadow of what was coming. **Jesus is the bridge from heaven to earth** - not the PLACE where God meets man, but the PERSON through whom God meets with man.

Consider titles given to Jesus in this first chapter in the Gospel of John:

- “**The Word**”, “**God**” (v.1),
- “**the light**” (v.9)
- “**Christ/Messiah**” (vv.10, 41) - the anointed redeemer
- “**Lamb of God**” (v.29) who takes away the sins of the world
- “**Son of God**” (v.34, 49) and “**the King of Israel**”

John's Reason for Writing

John 20:30-31 (CSB) ³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

- **Are you BELIEVING?** What's the evidence in your life?
- **Are you SEEKING?** Are you making time to PRAY & open the Scriptures, & marinate on them?
- **Are you SHARING?** When's the last time you took the opportunity?

* **Want to talk further?** Please contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), or another follower of Jesus soon!
Or call our **deacons & wives:** *Fain & Linda Poppell, Tom & Martha Waddail, Steve & Debbie Bass, Freddy & Joyce Howard, Jere & Darlene Burnette, Alan & Christy Androski, Willy & Melissa Gamalero.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What challenged or encouraged you from today's teaching?
2. **Read John 1:43-45.** Are you familiar with any of the places where Moses and the prophets wrote about the One to come (i.e. Jesus)? Share passages you can look at together, or consider making this a homework assignment to talk about during the week.
3. Jesus was aware of Nathanael sitting under the fig tree (John 1:48). Based on today's teaching, what was Nathanael likely doing there? Based on this past week, have you made time to get alone with God in prayer and to study/meditate on the Scriptures? If not, why not? If so, how does it encourage you to know that Jesus sees YOU as you seek Him, too?
4. Which of the titles given to Jesus in the first chapter of the Gospel of John intrigue you the most? Why?
5. Do you have a planned time to pray & open the Scriptures? If so, what are you currently reading? If not, kick around some ideas on how to help each other get into the Scriptures daily.
6. Who are you currently praying for to come to Jesus? How might God use YOU to share or serve them?
7. Share how you can pray for one another this week and make a phone call to check on each other this week.