



# Jesus Calls His First Disciples

## Story Elements

- **Text:** John 1:35-51
- **Setting:** circa 26 AD in Judea and Galilee
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, John the Baptist, John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael
- **Plot:** Jesus calls several men to be his first disciples.
- **Key word(s):** “\_\_\_\_\_” – This phrase, spoken twice (vv 39, 46), emphasizes the means to making disciples: invitation. As Jesus invited Andrew and John to his lodging, and as Philip invited Nathanael to meet Christ, so we invite others to see for themselves that this Jesus of Nazareth is Savior they need.
- **Climax:** *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. This is the climax because the story builds up from one who preaches Christ with certainty (John the Baptist) to one who questions Christ skeptically. We see the Savior’s divine power as he attracts unsolicited confession (“Behold the Lamb of God!”) and easily overcomes cold-hearted cynicism.

## Jesus Calls Andrew and John

- (vv. 35-37) As John the Baptist preached, he declared as Jesus walked by, *Behold, the \_\_\_\_\_ of God!* Two of the Baptist's disciples, Andrew and John<sup>1</sup>, took note of such an important proclamation and began to follow Jesus instead.
  - (vv 38-39) As the two followed Jesus, he turned and asked, *What seek ye?* The Savior was not reprimanding them for unwanted attention but inviting the seemingly bashful men to a closer acquaintance.
  - Rabbi, where dwellest thou.* The duo’s answer indicated deep interest. By calling him rabbi (teacher) they were asking to be his \_\_\_\_\_ – and as far as Scripture records, they were Jesus’ first disciples.

**APPLICATION** ➔ *They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day.* What a blessed time they must’ve had with the Savior! To be the first to hear Christ expound his doctrine and preach his gospel is truly a high honor for Andrew and John! We know their conference with Jesus was life-changing because the next day they go to look for others to come and meet this Rabbi from Nazareth.

## Jesus Calls Peter

- (v 41) Not long after Andrew met Jesus, he went to his brother \_\_\_\_\_ and said, *We have found the Messiah!* And Andrew brought Simon to Jesus.
  - (v 42) Jesus, knowing his purpose and plan, declared to Peter, *Thou shalt be called \_\_\_\_\_.* Jesus was not only changing his name, but he was also foretelling the important role that Peter would play in the founding of the Church.

**APPLICATION** ➔ How important is it to share our faith with those to whom we are closest. Matthew Henry exhorts, “We ought with a particular concern and application to seek the spiritual welfare of those that are related to us; for their relation to us adds both to the *obligation* and to the \_\_\_\_\_ of doing good to their souls.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry explains the unnamed disciple was probably John “the penman of this gospel, whose manner it is industriously to conceal his name, ch. 13:23, and 20:3.” We are also given a hint to the identity of this unnamed disciple by the fact that John gives the very hour of the day in which these events occurred – a very specific detail that might indicate a personal and precious memory.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1922.

- (b) By giving Simon the name *Peter*, Jesus gave him a great honor, displayed his divine authority, and prophesied of Peter's future role in church \_\_\_\_\_.

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## Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

3. (vs. 43) The next day, in Galilee, Jesus found Philip and said, *Follow me*. Philip was from \_\_\_\_\_, Peter and Andrew's hometown.
- (a) (vv. 44-45) Philip then went to Nathanael and announced, *We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of \_\_\_\_\_, the son of Joseph*. Philip was referring to well known Messianic prophecies:

*Deuteronomy 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;*

*Jeremiah 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.*

- (b) (v 46) Nathanael was skeptical, and retorted, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Galileans were generally despised by the Jews of Judea. Christians were later contemptuously referred to as the "sect of the \_\_\_\_\_." (Acts 24:5) Philip countered Nathanael's skepticism by simply saying, *Come and see*.
- (c) (vv 47-49) Nathanael's skepticism soon melted away in the light of Christ's divine knowledge – not only did Jesus know Nathanael's character, he knew something about him that no other person could have known. Why do you think Jesus mentioned Nathanael's sitting under a fig tree? \_\_\_\_\_
4. (vv. 50-51) Jesus assured Nathanael that would see even greater evidence of his divinity saying *ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man*. Jesus was referencing the story of Jacob's \_\_\_\_\_ in Gen. 28:12 and showing that he is the only link between the world of men and that of God.

**APPLICATION** ➔ This story portrays for us the majestic \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation: God calls, and we call; God seeks, and we seek; God initiates, and we respond. God wills, and we will. These things at first seem like they can't be true at the same time, but they are. In this story, Jesus is pursuing and being pursued.

*Joh 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you*

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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): "come and see" • 1. Lamb; b) students • 2. Simon; a) Cephas ➔ opportunity; b) leadership • 3. Bethsaida; a) Nazareth; b) Nazarenes; c) It could be that he was recently praying or meditating beneath a fig tree • ladder; ➔ paradox