

The Twelve Apostles

Lesson 2

Bartholomew

"The Apostle Conspicuous for His Transparency"

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Text: John 1:43-51.

Introduction: *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.*

Bartholomew is the same as Nathanael in John's account of him coming to Christ. How precious is this picture of a friend telling another friend I have found him, Jesus of Nazareth. Nathanael is listed as Bartholomew in all four lists of the Twelve. The synoptic Gospels and the book of Acts contain no details about Nathanael's background, character, or personality. In fact, they each only mention him once when they list all twelve disciples. John's gospel features him in just two passages: in John 1, where his call is recorded, and John 21:2, where he is named as one of those returning to fishing with Peter after Jesus' resurrection and before His ascension.

I. The Man with A Double Name.

Bartholomew is a Hebrew surname meaning "son of Tolmai." Nathanael means "_____." So he is Nathanael, son of Tolmai, or Nathanael Bar-Tolmai. What is the significance of Tolmai or Talmi (II Sam. 13:37), or Tholmai? Among the Jews there was a sect known as Tholmaens, from Tholmai, a pupil of Heber, an ancient Hebrew master.

II. The Man Who Learned of Christ's Omniscience.

We know that Jesus always knew what was in man for the Word of God declares:

John 2:24-25. *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew _____.*

III. A Man Who Was Introduced to Christ By A Friend.

When Philip answers the call to follow Christ along with Andrew and Peter it would seem his first thoughts are to go and tell Nathanael of his great find. The case here seems to be one friend telling another friend about Jesus. While they were united in friendship before of their interest in the Old Testament prophecy, now their friendship would be even deeper from the fellowship of Christian _____.

IV. A Man of Strong Prejudice.

Nathanael's prejudice against Nazareth, so unexpected in one so meek and amiable, sprung not from _____, as in the case of the people of Judaea, who despised the Galileans in general, but from _____. He was a Galilean himself, and as much an object of Jewish contempt as were the Nazarenes. His inward thought was, Surely the Messiah can never come from among a poor despised people such as we are - from Nazareth, or any other Galilean town or village?

V. A Man with Deep Religious Sentiments.

The Lord Jesus commended him for his virtues in a three-fold way.

A. His Trust. He was a true _____.

B. His Transparency "In Whom there is no guile."

In whom there is no guile was not a compliment of flattery, but the congratulation of _____.

C. His Tryst. "under the fig tree"

The "Fig-Tree," emblem of the _____ nation (Matt. 24:32) was the favorite tree under which Jews would retire for prayer and meditation (1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:1-6; Zech. 3:10). Thus, it was under his own fig-tree Nathanael often went to commune with God, and not at the corners of streets to be seen of men, as the Pharisees did.

1Kings 4:25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

D. His Testimony. "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

Just and devout hearts in Israel, eagerly anticipating the coming of the Lord's Christ, instantly recognized Him as such.

VI. The Man Who Was Graciously Rewarded.

Nathanael, who possibly realized more of the glory of Christ than any of his fellow-disciples, was to behold with open face His _____ glory.

John 1:50-51. 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. 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.

Bartholomew acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God; and that would be true of Him, but now Jesus will identify Himself as the Son of _____. The term is employed some seventy times is introduced for the first time to these disciples.

Bartholomew would learn of the omniscience of Jesus when the Lord saw him under the fig tree, but he will learn of the omnipotence of Jesus by his provided fish and bread for them after their failure of fishing all night and catching nothing. Jesus invited them to "_____,"

Conclusion: We have only two glimpses of this apostle and then he disappears, leaving us nothing but conjecture of what the Master accomplished through him in the apostolic age. I would say that as in our lives, that once we come to know Him and recognize who He is all ends well for us. We have to marvel that He knows us and yet loves us in spite of who we are has a place for us in His dear Kingdom.