

Call The Witnesses (Part 2)

John 1:43-51

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What we've looked at actually is two sections in these verses, and I want to review just a little bit. In verses 19-34, we saw the witness of John the Baptist, first in verses 19-28 with the priests and the Levites. They came to Him questioning Him, "Are you the Messiah," and John said, "No." "Are you Elijah?" "No." "Are you that prophet?" He said, "No," and we covered that. In verses 29-34, we saw John's witness, that is, John the Baptist's witness concerning Christ at His baptism. Beginning in verse 35, and it runs through our text tonight to the end (verse 51), we see the witness of the first followers of Jesus. Jesus is now beginning to gather His followers—His disciples—who will become His apostles. The first two to follow Jesus were Andrew and John, and they went and got Peter. Andrew got his brother Peter in verses 35-42. They were first disciples of John the Baptist, John actually pointed them to Jesus, and they followed Him.

Then, we come to verse 43. I want you to notice, "The day following," notice that statement, "The day following," and turn in your Bible back to verse 29. It says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Then notice verse 35, "Again, the next day," so what you actually have in verse 29 is day two in this four-day little episode. In verse 35, "Again the next day," you have day three, "after John stood, and two of his disciples," that was Andrew and John, Andrew then found his brother Peter, and Jesus changed his name to Cephas, which means a rock or a stone. Notice finally we come to our text (verse 43), "The day following," so in each of these sections you have a reference to the day, and it's consecutive days, and if I'm right in my interpreting of this, this is day four. So, "The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee," now this is the first time in the gospel of John we find a reference to Galilee.

Jesus has been down in the area of Judea in the area of Jerusalem and down by the Dead Sea in the Jordan Valley. Now, you really need to, as a Bible student, familiarize yourself with (I'm sorry. I should've thrown a map on the screen, and I will as we go through John's gospel) the geography of the holy land in the time of Christ. You don't have to be an expert in this, but you should understand the land of Israel during the time of Christ. Basically, it ran from north to south, three districts. The top district around the city of Galilee in the north was the area known as Galilee. It's what we would call a county, a region. Then, in the center of the land was the area known as Samaria. In the southern area of the land was Judea. In Judea would be the area there where the city of Jerusalem was. On the eastern side of all this ran the Jordan valley, so from the Sea of Galilee out the south end of the sea, the Jordan River runs down and then trickles into the Dead Sea where it stops. There's no outlet, only inlet. That's why it's called the Dead Sea. It just takes in, it doesn't give out, it all just kind of evaporates in the lowest place on planet earth, so it's very warm and very hot. Jesus, for the first time, heads north into the region of Galilee. This is where He would actually get His disciples from. Now, He was from this area, and we're going to see tonight that He's called the Nazarene or He's from Nazareth.

We visited Nazareth on our last trip to Israel, but Nazareth is by the Sea of Galilee and it's in the hill country just to the west of the Sea of Galilee. It's an area that was despised by the orthodox Jews. Jesus was—catch this—born in Bethlehem as the prophets spoke about. Micah said He would be coming from Bethlehem, but He was raised in Nazareth for thirty years and then moved His headquarters to Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee. He was actually born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, but was kind of identified with that and became known as the Nazarene, and His ministry headquartered in the Sea of Galilee in the town called Capernaum where Andrew and Peter actually ended up moving as well. When you go to Israel you visit what's called the home of the city of Peter in Capernaum there on the seaside. They were fishermen. They were strong, healthy, go-for-it kind of working fishermen. He didn't go to the scribes or the Pharisees or the religious community. He didn't go to the religious elite, the educated, or the aristocrats, He went to the average everyday blue-collar workers.

John 1:43, "The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me." We'll come back to this. "Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see." It's interesting that Philip didn't say, "Yeah, sure! Something good can come out of it." He didn't argue with him. He didn't debate with him. He didn't discuss with him. He didn't chide him for making this kind of statement. He just invited 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! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me?" or how is it You know me? "Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 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. 51 And he saith unto him, Verily," or truly, "verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Go back with me to verse 43. Jesus goes way to the north up around the Sea of Galilee. Now, He does something unique thus far in the gospel of John. Thus far, others had pointed to these disciples that Jesus is the Messiah and the Lamb of God (John the Baptist), and they had followed Him or had come through the witness of others. This time, it's a direct call from Jesus to Philip. I emphasize that because I'm going to make a point here. In the other cases, God used an individual to say, "Hey, we found the Messiah. Come and see," or "Hey, come check this out," or John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God," and they followed Jesus. "Where do You dwell?" and He said, "Come and see." This is a unique thing that we discover here, Jesus actually finds Philip. Isn't it interesting the Bible says that Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," and here we have it. Can you imagine how blessed Philip was? Can you imagine Jesus showing up knocking on your door? "Hey, I want you to follow Me." "Oh! Praise the Lord! I'd be glad to follow You!" That God would call me, that God would choose me, that God would pick me! In the other cases they followed the Lord and said, "Can

we hang out with You? Where are You dwelling?” and “Can we get to know You?” Jesus said, “Okay. Come and see,” but now He goes to Philip Himself.

The name Philip means lover of horses. It's an interesting name. Philip became one of the disciples, a prominent disciple. He was the practical disciple. When Jesus said to feed the multitude of five thousand men and women in Galilee, it was Philip that said, “Two hundred denarii would not be sufficient to feed this great multitude.” He was the one that took out the calculator and added the people up and said, “It can't happen. No way. Forget it. It ain't gonna happen.” The Lord doesn't need our lack of faith or skepticism to do a marvelous miracle. So he finds this fisherman named Philip and “...saith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.”

Bethsaida was at the northern tip or end of the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is a pear-shaped lake with the large portion up at the top. It's about 13 miles long by about 8 miles wide. It's a body of fresh water. It's a fresh water lake, but Bethsaida was up in the north. The name Bethsaida means house of fishing or house of the fishermen. It was also the home of Andrew and Peter.

Now, I want to point out here that Philip came by direct call from Jesus. We're going to see that Nathanael was directed to come see Jesus by his brother Philip, and Andrew brought Peter. The lesson is that God uses different ways to bring people to saving faith. Not everyone gets saved on a Sunday morning by walking the aisle and praying a prayer in front of the platform. I sometimes have people say, “Well, you know, Pastor, I've never come forward in an invitation,” or “I've never prayed the sinner's prayer, but I've been born again. Do I need to walk forward?” The answer is no. God sees your heart. You can be in the shower at home, you can be in the bed, you can be eating cereal, you know, at your breakfast nook, or you can be driving your car on the freeway. You can be in any situation and call upon the name of the Lord, and you'll be saved.

Sometimes God brings people through a process where they're witnessed to, or shared with, maybe a brokenness in their life, and they turn to the Lord. Sometimes people struggle with intellectual issues or questions that they have of doubts and fears, and we have different ways and different kinds of avenues or roads, but the fact that we reach the same destiny is what's important. Sometimes in the church we kind of frown on people that didn't have the same experience we had. Not everyone has the Damascus Road experience. Sometimes it's more quiet. Sometimes it's more subtle. You may not feel anything or any emotion, but that's not what's important. The important thing is that you've been born again and you've come to know Christ. Jesus said, “No man comes to the Father unless the Spirit draws him.” He also talked about the Father calling them. In John 15:16 He said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” I just think that this is a beautiful reminder of how Jesus found Philip. When He said, “Follow Me,” in the Greek that phrase literally means keep following Me. It was a call to continually, ongoingly, follow Jesus. He's calling him to be a disciple.

It's a beautiful thing when God's Spirit calls us to follow Him. I still look back on the time in my

life when the Spirit of God came and convicted me, converted me, drew me, filled me, and was working in my life at that time. It was just such an amazing thing that God would reach down in His love and grace and mercy and save me in my humble estate.

It says that Andrew and Peter lived in Bethsaida as well. Verse 45, “Philip findeth Nathanael,” the name Nathanael means God has given. We’re not sure, but it’s possible that he had a second name and was known by Bartholomew. In John’s gospel he’s called Nathanael, but in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Nathanael doesn’t appear but the name Bartholomew does. It’s believed to be the case that Nathanael was none other than Bartholomew, and it is common in those days, it isn’t so uncommon today, to have more than one name; so he was also known as Bartholomew. He comes to Nathanael and says, “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph,” so people come to Christ in different ways through different means. They don’t all come from someone witnessing to them, but they all do come by hearing the Word of God. The Bible says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Many times it’s a friend, a family member, co-worker, an acquaintance, or somebody you know that shares with you.

Now, we have a situation where Philip is sharing with Nathanael. I want you to know that he used the Scriptures. He pointed Nathanael to the Old Testament, “Moses in the law, and the prophets.” Those were the two classic divisions that the Jews had for the Old Testament Scriptures. When he uses this phrase, “Moses in the law, and the prophets,” the law and the prophets were the two main divisions of the Old Testament, and the term is used for describing the Old Testament. He’s saying, “We’ve found Him whom the Old Testament writes about, speaks about, points to, and prophesies—the law and the prophets—He is “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Let me just mention this. In your personal evangelism, when you’re sharing the gospel and you’re telling others about Jesus, you want to use the Scriptures to point them to Jesus Christ. You want to use the Word of God—John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9 (I preached it this past Sunday), Romans 6 (you memorize the Roman Road)—and you share the Word of God. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to convict and to convert people and draw them to Jesus Christ.

Remember when Philip the evangelist, which is a different Philip in the book of Acts, went down to Samaria and encountered the Ethiopian eunuch riding in his chariot. The Ethiopian eunuch was reading from Isaiah the prophecy of Messiah. Philip comes along and says, “Do you understand what you’re reading?” And he says, “No. How can I unless someone interprets it for me?” So Philip jumps up in the chariot and began to preach Jesus from the Old Testament. I sometimes wonder if we were in Philip’s place and someone’s reading from Isaiah, how would we do in saying, “Let me preach Christ to you from this Old Testament passage.” Would we be able to take the Old Testament and point them to Jesus Christ?

By the way, the Old Testament is all about Jesus; the New Testament is all about Jesus. It didn’t take very long for Adam and Eve to sin in the garden of Eden, and God has to kill an animal to cover them with skin—that’s a picture of something dying to cover their sin—so right away there’s a picture of Jesus. It doesn’t take long for the prophecy of Jesus that the seed of

the woman would bruise the head of the serpent and that he would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. It's a prophetic Scripture about Jesus the Messiah. All through the Old Testament, all of the lambs that were slain were all pointing to Jesus Christ.

Then, we see that in the tabernacle, every facet of that tabernacle—the curtain, on the outside not very attractive, but inside the gold and the purple and the beautiful colors—all represent Jesus Christ. Every piece of furniture in the tabernacle represented Jesus Christ. The priest represented Jesus Christ. He's a priest now after the order of Melchizedek. The prophets spoke of Him in verbal predictive prophecy. There was typical predictive prophecy all through Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, so all through the Old Testament Jesus was there, not just the book of Moses, which is the first five books of the Bible, but through the law and even the prophets, "did write," and this is about, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

As I pointed out, Jesus was born in Bethlehem but raised in Nazareth, so He was known as Jesus the Nazarene. He worked in the carpenter shop that his father Joseph had, but He's also called, "the son of Joseph." Don't let that confuse you. Some people have mistakenly said, "Well, see there, He is not really born of a virgin. He's called the son of Joseph." This "son of Joseph" is only in the legal sense. He's not his biological father, and this is still very early on when He's just calling His disciples. He probably hasn't even yet disclosed the concept of His virgin birth yet, but many times in those days you were known as the son of whoever your father was, so He was identified with Joseph even though the Bible is very clear, and we must not deny the true doctrine of the virgin birth even though He's called the "son of Joseph."

In verse 46, "And Nathanael said unto him," when he heard the word Nazareth said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" He was from Bethsaida, so they were rival towns. It was kind of like, "Nah, I don't think so." You know, Nazareth is not even named in the Old Testament. You don't find a reference to Nazareth in the Old Testament. Now, I'm a little bit hesitant to draw analogies to like Barstow or Victorville or Fontana or something. I grew up in San Bernardino. San Bernardino isn't exactly known as being the greatest place in all the world. I was down in Dana Point one day and met a couple. I was talking to them back then and they said, "Where are you from?" "I'm from San Bernardino." They said, "We're sorry." Of course, they were from Dana Point, you know. I'm only joking, but I do kind of cap a lot on Barstow or that kind of a thing, but that's like saying, "Weed, California," Where's this Messiah from? He came from Terra Bella or Weed, California, or whatever it might be, and nobody even knows. By the way, when I travel around the world, no one has heard of Menifee, California. "Where's that? Can anything good come out of Menifee?" "Revival Christian Fellowship," amen? We are blessed to have a great church here in our city. Amen?

Nathanael right away just kind of dismissed it. He thought, Nazareth? O Man! You gotta be kidding me! Maybe Rome or Athens or Jerusalem, but Nazareth? As I said, the orthodox Jews of Judea despised and looked down upon the Galileans, so this was something that was really hard for Nathanael to comprehend. God used Philip and the Scriptures to point him to Jesus, but Philip just simply said, "Come and see." I like that in his evangelism he didn't argue, debate, or discuss. Someone said, "Idle speculation is no substitute for personal investigation." I like

that. Sometimes when you're witnessing to your family, your friends, you just say, "Hey, taste and see the Lord is good. Just come to church. Try it. Check it out. Hear the gospel," or "Just trust Jesus," or "Pray to Him," or "Turn your life over to Him. The Lord is good." We need to point people to Jesus.

Actually, one of the greatest words of the New Testament is the word "come." Put it in your Concordance or cross-reference that sometime, all the "comes" in the Bible—"...Come. And let him that heareth say, Come," "Come and see,"—all the great "comes" and God calling us to come and to drink of the water of life freely.

Now, in verse 47, "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him," this story is so cool, "and saith of him, Behold," look, "an Israelite," underline that word "Israelite." It has significance. "...indeed," or for sure or in truth, "in whom is no guile," no phoniness, no hypocrisy, no duplicity. Nathanael has never seen Jesus and doesn't really know who He is. Jesus has never been with Nathanael, but as he's coming, Jesus makes a statement about his character. Do you know that God knows you? He knows all about you? He knows the very hairs of your head. He has them all numbered. Every time you comb your hair, He takes out His calculator and changes the number, you know, as you lose your hair. Not a sparrow falls to the ground but what God knows about it. He attends the funeral of every sparrow, and you're more valuable than many sparrows. He knows you. He loves you. Again, I'm struck by the fact that Jesus knew Nathanael.

It's interesting that "Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me?" There are so many thoughts going through my brain. It's really hard. If I seem a little disjointed, it's because I have all this information and I'm preaching extemporaneously tonight (I have no notes) but interesting. If Jesus called you and said, "Behold, a man or a woman with whom is no guile," would you not say, "Really, Lord?" Would you not say, "Lord, I don't think so. You sure You know what You're talking about?" I would just be so humbled. I would just be kind of, "Lord, I don't know about that," but he didn't know Jesus was Lord at this time. He was just...at this point in the conversation, Nathanael is just kind of like, "How do You know me? How do You know my heart? Jesus is actually describing his inner character. I believe with all my heart that what we have here is an example of the omniscience of Jesus Christ, that Jesus is actually looking into Nathanael's heart. "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," indicates that Nathanael was a non-hypocritical, genuine, sincere, devoted believer in God and in the hope of Messiah. He would be on par with Simeon and Anna who looked for redemption in Israel. You know, not everyone was a Pharisee or a Sadducee or a religious hypocrite among the Israelites. Some of them were really humble and loved God and looked for the coming of Messiah. This story is going to unfold some pretty cool stuff in just a moment as we look at it, but Nathanael, basically in awe, just says, "Well, how is it You know who I am? How do You know me?"

It's interesting, when we get to John 4, that Jesus encounters another person at a well that He had an appointment with. This time she was not a Jew. She was a Samaritan. You've heard the parable of the good Samaritan, this is the bad Samaritan. He sits on the well and starts to

dialogue with her. When she finally comes to faith in Christ, she runs back into town and says, "Come see a Man that told me everything I ever did." Wow, the omniscience of Christ! He knows all things, and when God in His love and grace looked down and chose you, He knew who you were. He chose you not because of you, but in spite of you. He chose you based upon His marvelous grace!

"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." You need to understand that when He says (verse 47), "...an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," there isn't a reference to or a tie in here with the story from Genesis 28 of a man by the name of Jacob. Remember what Jacob's name was changed to? It was changed to Israel. Jacob was not a man of no guile. He was a tricker. He was a heel-catcher. He was conniving. He was a schemer. He was a manipulator. I believe, and I've got to spill the beans now so that I can have a way to explain where we're headed here in verse 51, that Nathanael was actually reading Genesis, the story of Jacob. I could be wrong, but I'm in good company with a lot of good Bible scholars that agree with this. He was probably reading from the book of Genesis about the man Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Now, the name Israel means governed by God, and his name would be changed as his character would change as he would come under the influence of God's promises and plan for his life.

When Jesus said, "...an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," the reason why Nathanael is kind of blown away is because he was just reading from Genesis and meditating on the story of Jacob and all of his tricking, his father-in-law Laban, his brother Esau, and all the trickery that he was involved in stealing the birthright; yet Jesus contrasts him here with this man Jacob who is called Israel. He purposely calls him "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" He says, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." You know that one of the places the Jews would sit, read Scripture, and meditate was under the shade of a fig tree. Fig trees have big leaves, and it's a beautiful shade tree. Jews would commonly use fig trees to sit under and do their meditation, prayers, and reading. Obviously, he was pointing out that, "I saw thee," I knew you when you were under the fig tree before Philip even ever called you. Notice the response. Nathanael is blown away. He's absolutely convinced that Jesus, this Nazarene, is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, "Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi," teacher, "thou art the Son of God."

I'm going to close tonight with the seven titles for Jesus in John 1, but notice this one here, Son of God, and the definite article "the Son of God." Jesus is always the Son of God—never a Son of God but the Son of God—in a unique sense that no one else is, speaking of His deity. John wrote the gospel so that we believe He's the Son, "and that believing ye might have life through his name." Then, he calls Him, "the King of Israel." That is another title for Messiah, which is interpreted Christ. The King of Israel is another term or title for the Messiah. Zechariah 9:9 and Psalm 2:6-7 talks about the King and the Messiah being the same.

In verse 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. 51 And he saith unto him,

Verily, verily,” this is where it all comes together. This is a spectacular verse (verse 51). Don’t miss it. “Verily, verily,” truly, truly, “I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” If you just read that verse without the knowledge of the background of the book of Genesis and the story of Jacob’s ladder, you would not really put it all together and understand Genesis 28. Jesus just said, “Stick around. You’re going to see greater things. You’re impressed that I saw you under the fig tree and I knew your heart and I understand who you are? You ain’t seen nothing yet, Buckaroo!” That’s a free paraphrase. “Hang on, next chapter, chapter 2, you’re going to see Me turn water into wine. You’re going to see Me walk on water. You’re going to see Me give sight to the blind. You’re going to see Me raise the dead. You’re going to see some marvelous things, but you’re going to see the heavens open, ‘and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.’” He closes with this title for Jesus, the Son of man—in verse 49, “Son of God” and “King of Israel,” verse 51, “the Son of man.”

You say, “Well, John, I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Remember Jacob and his brother Esau? Esau was the big strong man’s man, the hunter. His dad Isaac liked him, and Jacob was a mommy’s boy, you know, and hung out baking. He had an apron on and baked with his mom in the tent and stuff like that. Sorry, forgive me. What happened was his mother liked Jacob and Isaac liked Esau so there’s a rift there, but God had chosen Jacob to be the one that would be the inheritor. When Jacob saw his brother come home from hunting that one day with that nice catch and he had made some stew that he liked and was cooking it up, his brother smelled the soup and said, “Hey, give me some of that soup. I want to eat it.” He said, “Well, I’ll give it to you, if you sell me your birthright.” He says, “What good is my birthright if I’m dead? Here’s your birthright,” you know, “Here give me my soup,” and starts to scarf down the soup. He didn’t realize it, but he had actually just forfeited the blessings. When he came to realize it, he was really angry toward his brother Jacob, and there was a big rift in the family.

We find that Jacob had to flee (I’m making a very long story, short) because he was afraid of the wrath of his brother Esau. His mother prepared some things for him, and he took off in the night. He traveled a long distance early one day—he traveled about 40 miles in one day. He came all the way to Bethel. He was running with a guilty conscience. He was upset and frustrated. He had to leave home. He didn’t know if he’d ever see his mom again. He comes to this spot and lays down for the night. He takes a rock and lays his head on a rock for a pillow. Now, you know you’re tired and you’ve got a guilty conscience when you can sleep with your head on a rock! When he went to sleep that night on the rock, the Bible tells us that God came to him in a dream of the heavens open and a ladder from earth up into heaven, and there were angels going up and down the ladder, ascending and descending upon this ladder, just as Jesus describes here in verse 51. When Jacob woke up in the morning, he said, “This is none other than the house of God,” and “God was in this place, and,” catch what he said, “I knew it not.” Isn’t it interesting sometimes that we can be stressed and running from God, unaware of the presence of God, we don’t feel like God is there, yet God is there when we least think, expect, or know it?

When Jacob went to bed that night he had nothing to indicate that God was with him, that God

would bless him, that God's hand was on him or His protection would guide him, but then God visited him with this vision of these angels up and down the ladder. He said, "God is in this place, and I knew it not. This is none other than the house of God," so he named the place, Bethel, the house of God.

How does it all tie together? Jesus is that ladder. Jesus is saying to Nathanael, "You're going to come to greater revelation, greater understanding, greater experience of the presence of God, the power of God, and understanding of God. God is going to reveal Himself to you in ways that you never even imagined!" Now, here's the deal. I believe, as I said, Nathanael was reading about Jacob, and he was reading the very story (verse 51) that Jesus alluded to there about Jacob's ladder and, no doubt, he was praying earnestly and asking God, "Would You reveal Yourself to me? Would You manifest Yourself to me? Would You come to me? Would You show me the truth? Would You work in my life?" He was pouring out his heart to God, and next thing he finds is Jesus saying, "Behold, an Israelite, in whom is no guile!" "How do you know me?" "I saw you under the fig tree." "You're the Messiah! You're the Son of God!" And He says, "You're going to see greater things, the heavens open, and the angels ascending and descending." I'm sure that Nathanael thought, This is unbelievable! Jesus was nailing it. He was actually answering Nathanael's prayer as he was calling out to God. A hungry heart God will not despise, and God came and manifested Himself, I believe, to Nathanael and revealed Himself to him.

This ladder becomes a picture or a type of Jesus Christ. How do we get to heaven? Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus is not only the revealer of God to man and the mediator of man to God, but He is that ladder by which we have access to God, God's promises are funneled to us, and we experience and see God.

I want to close by pointing out (and I won't tarry on them) that there are seven titles used for Jesus in the gospel of John 1. Interesting. The first is "the Word." We got that in verse 1. He is the logos, the Word, the revealer of God, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He is "the light" (verses 4-9). He is the true light that lights every man that comes into the world. In verse 29, the third one, He is the "Lamb of God." John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus died in our place to take our sins. In verse 41, He is called "the Messiah," the Mashiach, the anointed of God. In verse 49, we got it tonight, He's called "the Son of God." That's the full deity of Christ, "the Son of God." And, He's called "the King of Israel." He's the Messiah. In verse 51, the seventh statement in John 1, He is "the Son of man." That's an amazing title. That's the favorite title of Jesus for Himself. When Jesus wants to refer to Himself, His number one title is "the Son of man." It appears in the gospels 83 times. Where does it come from? Daniel 7:13. Check it out. In Daniel 7:13, "...behold, one like the Son of man...came to the Ancient of days...And there was given him dominion, and glory," it's a description of what we're going to be studying on Sunday morning about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

There are some Bible students that feel that it's not so much that Jesus (verse 51) was alluding

to Jacob's ladder, but some feel, since He says, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," that He's actually describing the Second Coming here. I don't hold that position, but it's an interesting view that this could be a reference to the Second Coming. You read Revelation 19, which describes the Second Coming, and it really parallels John 1:51. It's pretty amazing, and it could be that Jesus is saying, "Yet in the future, you're going to see the Son of man coming." But, here, Jesus is speaking and gives Himself this title, "Son of man." This speaks of the fact that He is the Messiah and that He is a man, so you have Son of God, Son of man. I'm convinced that the title conveys His humanity. Remember I emphasized that two weeks ago? The full humanity of Jesus and the fully deity in one Person, Jesus Christ. It's called the hypostatic union—two natures in one Person, the man Christ, fully God, fully man. This is a title from the Old Testament where we have here Jesus the Messiah from the book of Daniel.

What an interesting picture we find of Jesus in John 1—the Word, the light, the Lamb, the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel, the Son of man—who, the Bible says, comes with healing in His wings. So, we're going to be moving through the gospel of John. We start the first miracle next Wednesday night. Jesus goes to a wedding at Canaan. He blessed the wedding with His presence and turns water into wine just to bring joy to the heart of man. Let's pray.