

Jesus' First Believers

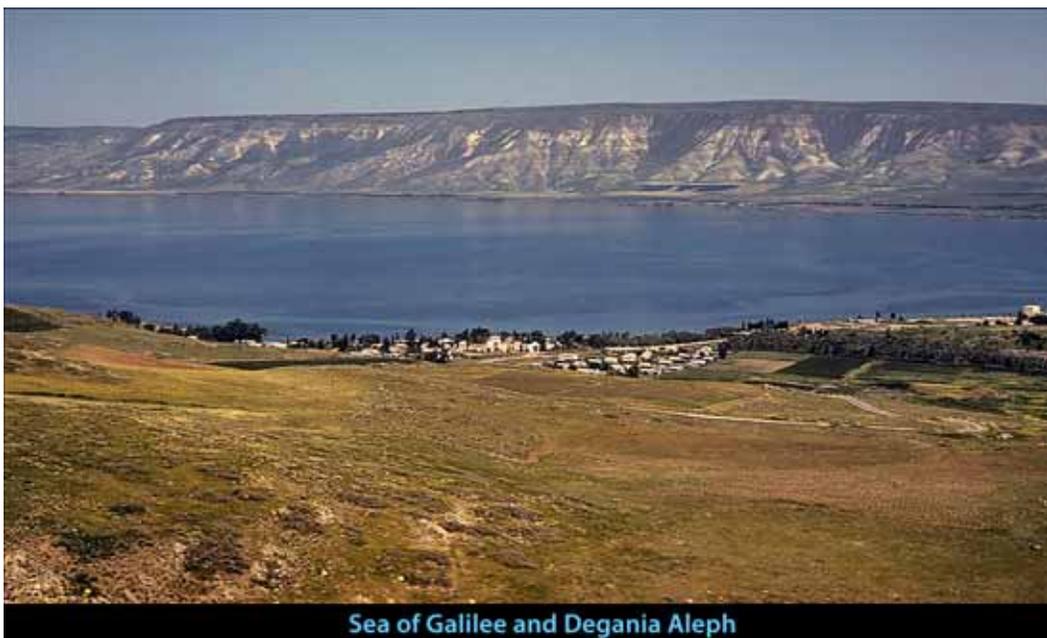
Life is deceptive much of the time. We move throughout our day doing one thing after another always knowing that there is something else we must accomplish. We accept the busy part of our life as necessary activity and tell ourselves that we will eventually take that long awaited vacation or we will eventually reach retirement when we can finally enjoy life. Most people look forward to the weekend. But when we get there, the weekend is often filled with necessary activities for the house or for the children. Rarely do we have time to just stop. When is the last time that you asked yourself, “Why am I doing all of this? What am I seeking? What do I want to accomplish with my life?” If we are honest, life is not what most of us want it to be. So when John the Baptist arrived declaring that someone great was coming, people were interested. They were looking for someone who would bring meaning into their lives and change their world.

BEHOLD THE LAMB! When we arrive at this passage of our study, John the Baptist is somewhere south of the Sea of Galilee on the east side of the Jordan River. John 1:35 opens by telling us that this is another day. We believe the day is Saturday.

The first clue is found in John 2:1 where we are told that Jesus had traveled for three days to a wedding in Cana of Galilee. The wedding probably occurred on a Wednesday, since according to Jewish custom virgins were married on Wednesday. Widows were married on Thursdays.

The second clue is found in John 1:43 where we are told that Jesus visited Philip after the events that started in John 1:35. Then all that we have to do is count four days backward from John 2:1 and we discover that John is standing on a Sabbath day, a Saturday, when Jesus approaches him.

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” (NASB) John 1:35-36



Sea of Galilee and Degania Aleph

Chronology of John 1-2

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
				<i>Religious leaders visit John the Baptist (John 1:19-28)</i>	<i>John introduces Jesus to the people (John 1:29-34)</i>	<i>John and Andrew believe in Jesus (John 1:35-42)</i>
<i>Philip and Nathanael believe in Jesus (John 1:43-51)</i>			<i>John and Andrew meet with Jesus</i>			

But why was John standing with two of his disciples? Was he waiting for Jesus or was he doing something else? It appears that he was waiting and that he had been waiting for awhile. He might have waited at the same place where he saw Jesus the previous day, Friday. When John finally saw Jesus, the Greek language implies that John started staring or gazing at Jesus while He walked toward him. John's eyes were fixed on Jesus as He walked toward him. And while he watched Jesus, John kept repeating, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" John wanted to tell everyone who Jesus was. He was the forerunner. John was pointing the way to Jesus. What did the people think? How did they respond? We do not know about all of the other people; but John's two disciples heard the statement, and they responded by wanting to know more.

The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." (NASB) John 1:37-39a

THE SEEKERS. John's two disciples started following Jesus. The Greek tells us that Jesus suddenly turned around and looked at them. Just imagine how these two men must have felt. There is only one reason they were following. If they had wanted a direct encounter with Jesus, they could have walked up and have spoken with Him, but they did not

do that. There is only one reason why they followed. They did not want to speak with Him. They wanted to watch Him for a while, but Jesus turned and looked at them. Wow! How would you feel? Then he asks, "What do you seek?"

They must have been uncomfortable because their reply was awkward, "Rabbi, where are You staying?" That did not answer Jesus' question, but it did reveal what they wanted. Now they wanted to talk with Him. So Jesus invited them to follow Him and speak with Him.

So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. (NASB) John 1:39b

We are not told what they talked about, but it is obvious from the next two verses that they discovered that Jesus was their Messiah.

They came seeking. They stayed and talked, and discovered that Jesus was more than just a man. These seekers believed in Jesus. They did not just find their Messiah; they found their Savior. They were so interested in Jesus that they talked with Him until about 4:00 pm in the afternoon (Jewish time). As a result, they stayed the rest of the day.

These two men were seekers. One of them was Andrew. The other man appears to be the disciple John. John's name never appears in the entire gospel of John. The only thing that is ever said about him is that he was the one whom Jesus loved. So John and Andrew sought to know Jesus, and Jesus

revealed Himself to them.

In Jeremiah 29:13-14 God promised that He will reveal Himself to anyone who truly seeks Him,

“You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD . . .”
(NASB) Jer. 29:13-14

These two men started following Jesus because they were spiritually hungry. They wanted something more than work, weekends, and retirement. They wanted God. They knew there was more to life. They wanted Jesus - their Messiah. Jesus knew their heart and so he asked them, “What do you seek?” They came seeking and just as God promised in Jeremiah, Jesus let them find Him in the quiet of an afternoon somewhere south of the Sea of Galilee. These two seekers found Him.

PETER COMES TOO! Andrew is so excited that he rushes off to find his brother Peter.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ). (NASB) John 1:40-41

Then Andrew finds some other people and not just Peter.

Andrew was very emotional. He was thrilled! Andrew had found what he had been looking for in life, and so he found Peter and brought him to Jesus.

He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter). (NASB) John 1:42

When Jesus saw Peter, He changed his name to Cephas. Now stop and think for a minute. How would you feel if some stranger told you that he was changing your name? Most of us would not like that very much. I do not know of anyone who would allow that to happen, but Peter did. Why? The answer is found in the white spaces of your Bible. That is, Peter and Jesus must have had a significant amount of time together before Jesus did this. The Bible does not record everything for us. We do not know what Jesus ate for breakfast or lunch. We are not told what they talked about all day or who else Andrew saw. Peter and Jesus spent time together, and Peter found his Messiah, Lord, and Savior just as John and Andrew did.

This was a day when three grown men found their God and Messiah. These men were not wimps. That is, they were not soft, lazy men. These were real, intelligent men who had found their Messiah. They saw Him in the flesh. Jesus was not a myth. He was real and they believed in Him.

Other Names of the Twelve Disciples

<i>Disciple</i>	<i>Other Name</i>
Simon	Peter or Cephas
James, son of Zebedee	Son of Thunder
John, brother of James	Son of Thunder
Andrew	
Philip	
Bartholomew	Nathanael
Matthew	Levi
Thomas	Didymus
James, son of Alphaeus	
Thaddeus	Judas, the son of James
Simon, the Zealot	
Judas Iscariot	

SAVIOR AND LORD. We are not told what happened later in the day between John, Andrew, and Peter. It was not important to the Holy Spirit to tell us. But the next thing we are told is that Jesus went into Galilee to find Philip.

The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. (NASB) John 1:43-44

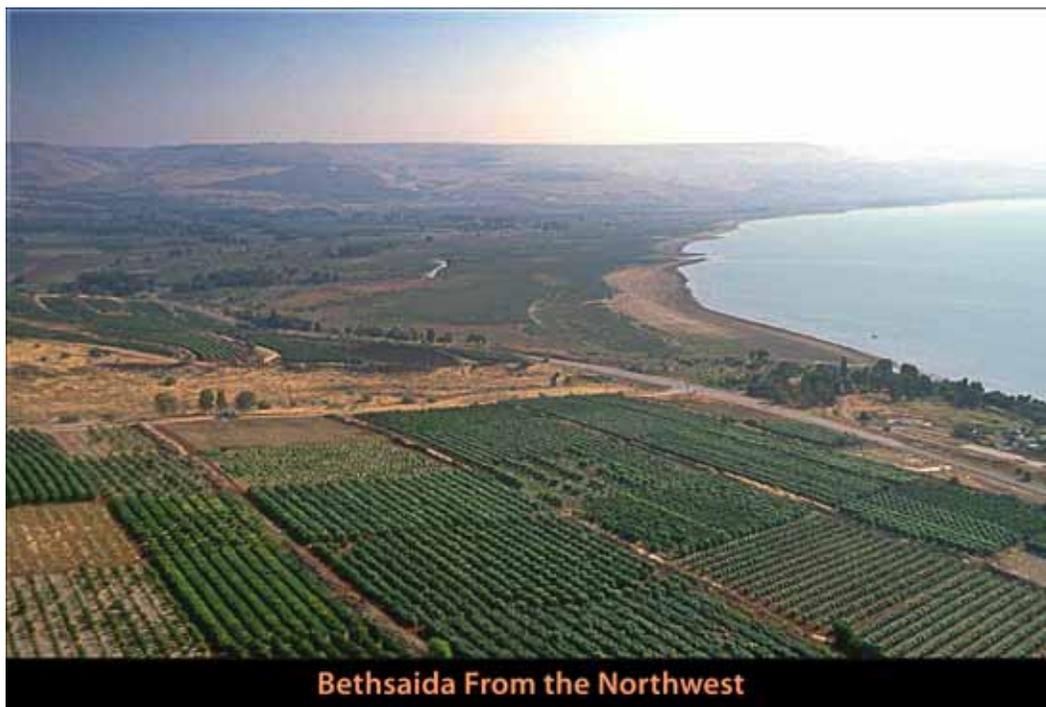
It was Sunday. We do not know who was with Jesus. John, Andrew, and Peter might have been with Jesus because they were all together later at the wedding in Cana. But we are not told. Jesus went searching for Philip, found him, and commanded him to follow. Philip was from the city of Bethsaida.

walked with, and asked questions of Him. In response, they believed.

... that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved . . . (NASB) Rom. 10:9

When a man or woman believes in Jesus, Jesus is looking for more than just a simple “I believe!” One who really believes will also yield his or her will to Jesus at least a little. The man or woman who will not submit to Jesus is not really a Christian. Both of these men believed, and Jesus tested their willingness to yield and submit. Have you yielded to Jesus?

MAN OF INTEGRITY. Philip responded to Jesus very



Once again, no one would just follow Jesus unless they had spent time together or unless Philip had seen Jesus before and knew Him. Even if that were true, no one just follows a stranger! Scripture does not give us all of the details, but these two men must have spent some time together before Jesus called him to follow.

That is the way God works with all of us. He does not expect us to just blindly believe. That is stupidity. Jesus gave them reason to believe in Himself. These men spoke with,

much as Andrew did. He immediately left Jesus and found someone - Nathanael, who is called Bartholomew, and told him about Jesus.

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” (NASB) John 1:45 -46

This is wonderful. Philip finds his friend and then tells him, “Come and see.” God calls us to come and see too! Come and see that Jesus is your God and Messiah. Come and see! Come, believe, follow Jesus, and seek Him more and more. He wants us to want Him - to know Him and love Him some more.

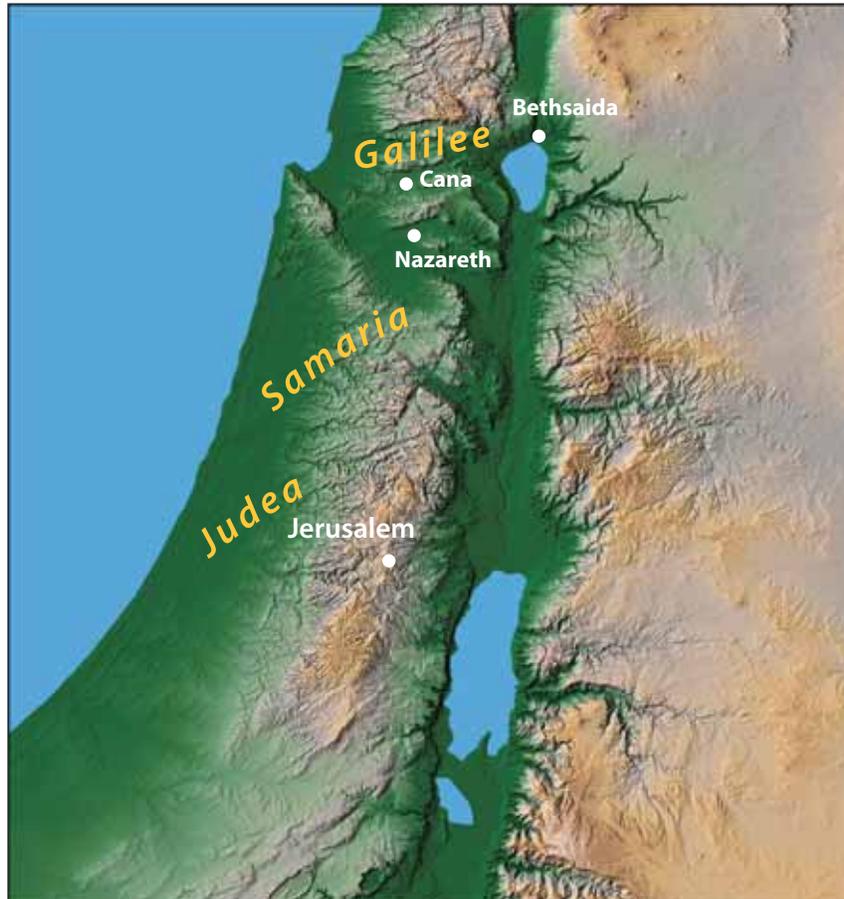
Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael *said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the

Son of God; You are the King of Israel.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” (NASB) John 1:47-50

When Nathanael arrives, Jesus treats this man differently from the others. He tells him that he is a man without guile and then Jesus surprises him with a miracle. The Greek word which is translated here as “guile” has the sense of one who deceives, is cunning, and is crafty. Therefore, since

Jesus said that he was not like that, we are to understand that Nathanael was honest and truthful. He was a man of integrity!

Why did the Holy Spirit tell us about Nathanael?



Nathanael is the fifth man who believed in Jesus. Each of these men made life changing decisions. Each man believed and submitted himself to Jesus, including Nathanael. We could ask, “Why tell us about Nathanael?” The answer appears to be that he is a man every reader can trust. He is a man of integrity. He is honest. He came looking not for some Messiah, or for some joker. He came looking for the Messiah and he found Him - Jesus!

CONCLUSION. Nathanael blurts out, “. . . You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.” Nathanael is the epitome of truth and integrity. He saw Jesus. He spoke with Jesus, and the pages of history declare that Jesus was and is the Messiah. Nathanael declares that we can believe in Him. We can submit to Him because He is the One. He is the one and only. He is our God. He calls us to seek Him and after we have found Him, we are to continue seeking to know Him more. There is more to life than weekends and retirement - there is Jesus!