



Epiphany 2

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Gospel

Nathanael finds Jesus

John 1:43-51



The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 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. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 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. 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.

Refs

And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene. (Matthew 2:23, KJV 1769).

Where is the OT quotation? Lots of conjecture amongst theologians but no definite answer.

The Jewish NT Commentary quotes De. 18:15

Deuteronomy 18:15
"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;"

Also quoted in Acts 3:22
"22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."

Nathanael

Nathanael who becomes a follower very early on in Jesus's ministry. Nathanael was with the Apostles at the end when Jesus showed himself to them in Galilee two weeks or so after the resurrection, so it is very likely that he was with them at other times, but the name Nathanael is not mentioned. Anyway no one knows for certain who was Nathanael. He must have been familiar with the scriptures that relate to the coming of a Messiah, who would be from the house of David, and should be born in Bethlehem. Since there is nothing positive to say about Nazareth itself (it was a poor place), perhaps Nathanael was doubtful that this man could be the Messiah. Yet, he did go with Philip to see for himself. Nathanael was probably looking for some sign to prove this man was the Messiah. When Jesus and Nathanael met, they recognized each other immediately (from childhood or school?). Jesus called to Nathanael, but did not say his name in the greeting, yet Nathanael's response was "where do you know me from?" The expression "I saw thee under the fig tree" is an Aramaic idiom which means "I have known you always".

Nathanael, like Peter, Andrew and Philip before him, recognized the Messiah in Jesus. The phrase "angels of God ascending and descending" is an Aramaic idiom which means "understanding between God and man, reconciliation." Jesus, as usual, claimed only to be Son of man, to emphasize his human character, for He wanted to continually remind his followers, that it was ordinary man who had the potential of performing "miracles".

John 21:2
"2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples."