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John 1

I. The Genealogy of the Eternal One (John 1:1-18) (Cf. Matt 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38)

(1) Deity (1:1-2)

1 In the **beginning** was the **Word**, and **the Word was with God**, and **the Word was God**.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1 In the beginning, the Word existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- "...beginning" - the "beginning" that John speaks of was not really the beginning of something new at a particular time. It was rather the time before anything that has come into existence began.

— John is writing about a new beginning, a new creation, and he uses words that recall the first creation. He soon goes on to use other words that are important in Gen 1, such as "life" (v4), "light" (v4), and "darkness" (v5).

— Gen 1 described God's *first* creation; John's theme is God's *new* creation. Like the first, the second is not carried out by some subordinate being. It is brought about through the agency of the *Logos*, the very Word of God.

- "...Word" [3x] - *logos*, words describe things, explain things, define things; they communicate ideas

— This is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Word of God (Cf. v14). When Jesus Christ came to earth at the Incarnation, He was the perfect description, explanation and definition of God the Father (Cf. v18; 14:9).

— You cannot find a greater description or picture of who God is than through the *logos* (Jesus Christ)

- "...the Word was with God" - Jesus Christ had eternal fellowship with God the Father; that fellowship was broken temporarily when at the crucifixion (2 Cor 5:21)

- Jesus knew that His intimate fellowship with the Father would be broken temporarily, so he prayed (John 17:5) that once His work on the cross was finished, that His fellowship be restored
- When we understand how His fellowship with the Father was broken, we understand Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane that if there was another option, let this cup pass from Me. Fortunately for us, that prayer was not answered.
- "with" - the Greek word gives the notion of equality; looking someone straight in the eye, not looking down or looking up at them
- "...the Word was God" - does not say "the Word was *a* God"
- There was a heresy dealt with in the early church called Arianism, which believed that Jesus Christ is a created being
- To address this heresy, the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), convened by Constantine to ensure church unity, declared Arianism to be a heresy via the Nicæan Creed, which contains a clause that states "begotten, and not made." Arianism is carried on today by Jehovah's Witnesses.
- The New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses translates this verse "the Word was a God" however any NT Greek authority will tell you that there is absolutely no manuscript authority for that statement
- "was" - imperfect *en* implies continuous existence (vs. coming into being)

Jehovah's Witnesses appeal to this verse to support their doctrine that Jesus was not fully God, but the highest created being. They translate it as "the Word was a god." Grammatically this is a possible translation since it is legitimate to supply the indefinite article ("a") when no article is present in the Greek text, as here. However, that translation here is definitely incorrect because it reduces Jesus to less than God, and this clearly contradicts many other passages that affirm Jesus' full deity (v2,18; Phil 2:6; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3; et al.). Here the absence of the indefinite article was deliberate. Often the absence of the article stresses the character or quality of the noun, as here (Cf. Heb 1:1-2).

2 **He** was in the beginning **with God**.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

2 He existed in the beginning with God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

- This statement clarifies further that Jesus was with God before the creation of the universe. It is a further assertion of Jesus' deity. He did not come into existence...He always existed. He did not become deity...He always was deity.

— "Before the world was created, the Word already existed" properly represents the Greek

- "He" - the *logos*, Jesus Christ

— Jesus has always been with God; as long as God has existed (eternity, Ps 90:2), Jesus was been with Him the entire time, which means both God the Father and Jesus Christ are eternal beings (Micah 5:2)

— There has never been a time when Jesus has not existed (Col 1:17). This is the reason why there had to be a virgin conception because if the male had taken part in the conception, there would've been a beginning point, and He would've inherited a sin nature from His father.

- "...with" - mutual fellowship and intercommunication; close personal relationship

- "...God" - *Elohim* is plural; in Hebrew, that requires *three*

Verses 1-2 lay out three essential truths about the Son of God:

1. His eternal pre-incarnate existence
2. His eternally distinct personal existence
3. His eternally divine nature

Belief in these truths are basic to the Christian faith.

(2) Pre-incarnate Work (1:3)

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

3 Through him all things were made, and apart from him nothing was made that has been made.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

- This is a description of what Jesus Christ was doing before the Incarnation...one of the things Jesus was doing was creating things (2 Peter 3:5)

— Everything that exists today was created by Jesus Christ

- Jesus Christ is not just the Creator of all things, as stated here (Cf. Col 3:17; Heb 1:2), but He is also the Redeemer of all things, which is described later in John's Gospel. These are two reasons why we should glorify Jesus Christ...because He is the Creator and He is the Redeemer.

— John's other treatment on Christ as the Creator, read Rev 4

— John's other treatment on Christ as the Redeemer, read Rev 5

— When you go to church and worship the Lord, these should be the two things on your mind...we worship Christ because He is the Creator of all things and He is the Redeemer of all things

- What the Jehovah's Witnesses will tell you is that Christ is the "Master Worker" which means that God the Father created God the Son, then God the Son created everything else

(3) Ministry to Men (1:4-5)

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

4 In him was life, and that life brought light to humanity.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

- John is developing a correlation with the Creation account in Gen 1...

— As John seeks to explain who Jesus Christ is, why does he use imagery from Gen 1?

Because the work that Jesus began in Gen 1 He continues in His Incarnation.

— All the way through John's Gospel, Jesus will be giving "light" and "life" just as He did in Gen 1 (Gen 1:3-4,20-28)

— Life (v4): He will heal people just before they die, and even raising Lazarus from the dead; He Himself will conquer death through His own resurrection from the dead

— Light (v5): He will restore light to man's life, and restore physical sight to a man born blind

— But more significant that either of these physical manifestations of light and life are the spiritual aspects that Jesus performed...what Jesus accomplished in physical creation, He now seeks to replicate in spiritual creation in the hearts of men.

- Jesus brings forth spiritual life in this Gospel...in 3:3 Jesus begins to describe the new birth. Why do men need the spiritual life of God? Because they are dead...they may be alive physically, but spiritually they are dead (Eph 2:1). Jesus offers new spiritual life in this Gospel...in fact it's the primary theme of the entire book.

5 And the Light shines in the darkness, and **the darkness did not grasp it.**

5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

5 And the light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

- Jesus also brings forth spiritual light (sight)...in 3:3, God told Nicodemus that if one is not born again, he cannot "see" the kingdom of God, highlighting Nicodemus' spiritual blindness. Jesus goes on to explain to him that He came into the world not only to restore his spiritual light, but also his spiritual sight.

- "...the darkness did not grasp it" - the darkness did not comprehend it, it did not compute with them

— They did not grasp the Light because of what light does...it exposes their sins/deeds (3:19-21), so they flee. They want no part of it.

— As believers grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, their light gets brighter, and the world is not thrilled with it, it's an annoyance to them. Something that exposes darkness is something they want to get away from.

— The greater your light shines, the more people will resist you. This is a natural reaction of darkness to light (2 Tim 3:12).

(4) Ministry of John the Baptist (1:6-8)

6 A man came, *one* sent from God, *and* his name was **John**.

6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

- "...John" - referring to John the Baptist, not John the Apostle (author)

— Jesus called John the Baptist the greatest prophet the world had ever seen up to that time (Matt 11:11)

— He was a prophet in the tradition of the OT prophets who bore witness to the light (Ex 3:10-15; Is 6:8; Jer 1:4; Cf. John 3:17)

— He was the last of the OT prophets (Luke 16:16), but also the first herald of the NT (Matt 3:1; Mal 3:1; Is 40:3)

— What made John the Baptist greater than Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Habakkuk? John the Baptist saw something that the other OT prophets never saw. They predicted the coming Messiah, but they never witnessed Him nor stood in His glory.

7 He came as a **witness**, to **testify** about the Light, so that **all** might **believe** through him.

7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.

7 He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe because of him.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

- "...witness...testify" - John the Apostle uses legal terms and imagery throughout this Gospel (Cf. 3:19; 8:10; 16:8)

— John the Baptist came as a witness to testify about the Messiah (Light) so everyone might believe in Him (not John, Jesus)

— John didn't come to put Jesus on a pedestal just to put Him on a pedestal, he came so that people would believe that He was the Messiah and put their trust in Him for the forgiveness of their sin and to obtain right standing before God.

- "...all" - this witness testimony from John the Baptist was given to all, so that all might believe (Cf. 3:16; 12:32; 1 John 2:2)

— According to John the Baptist's theology, every single person who ever lived is savable. Whether they become saved or not is up to them in terms of whether they trust in Christ for salvation.

— There is a doctrine called "Limited Atonement" that says that only the "elect" are savable. This is interesting theology, but it does not emanate from the Word of God. The

Bible is crystal clear that Jesus Christ came into the world to taste death for every man and woman.

— If I was stranded on a desert island and only had access to John's Gospel, and had no previous exposure to five-point Calvinism, I would never come up with the doctrine of Limited Atonement

- "...believe" - *pisteuō*, first usage in John's Gospel; used a total 99x in John's Gospel, and means to rely on, put your trust in, depend on, place your confidence in

— As soon as a person "believes" in the promises of Jesus Christ, the moment they are convinced of who Jesus Christ is and trust in His promise of eternal life, they are saved (justified). It becomes a decision that is irrevocable/irreversible.

— There is only a single condition that a lost sinner must satisfy in order to enter into a relationship with God, and that is to believe in this man, Jesus Christ

— The story of the Bible is not what man has done for God, it is what great things God has done for man, including His death, burial, resurrection and ascension back to heaven. God has done everything, and there is nothing left for us to do except believe.

8 He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light.

8 He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light.

8 John was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

- John the Baptist did not come into the world to steal the thunder or hog the show. He came into the world to attract attention to this Man, Jesus Christ.

— John the Baptist was to Jesus what Ed McMahon was to Johnny Carson. Ed McMahon didn't attract attention to himself, but instead directed attention to Johnny Carson. He didn't upstage Johnny, he didn't eclipse Johnny, he didn't steal Johnny's thunder...John the Baptist was simply there to attract attention to Jesus Christ (Cf. 3:30).

(5) Rejected & Accepted (1:9-13)

9 *This* was the true Light that, coming into the world, **enlightens every person**.

9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

9 This was the true light that enlightens every person by his coming into the world.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

- John the Apostle now develops a theme which will continue throughout his Gospel...the fact that Jesus was both accepted and rejected

— In v9-11, John will explain how most people rejected Him; in v12-13 he will explain how some accepted Him

— How does one "reject" Jesus Christ? The word John uses to define rejection is *unbelief*, not putting their trust in what Jesus has done for them. If someone is in this state, until

they change their mind, they are rejecting Jesus Christ.

— How does one "accept" Jesus Christ? The word John uses to define acceptance is *belief*

— Jesus Christ was probably the most polarizing Man to ever walk the face of the earth...people either loved Him or they hated Him. People either believed in Him or they rejected Him.

— All through this Gospel, John develops two parallel themes: one is faith, the other is unbelief. And at the end of the book, John says you decide which side of the ledger you want to be on...the side of acceptance/belief, or the side of rejection/unbelief. Neutrality is not an option.

- "...enlightens every person" - the purpose for Jesus' Incarnation: the Light came into the world to enlighten every man (because the entire world is savable) (3:16; 12:32)

— This verse means that every single person is in a position, especially when convicted by the Holy Spirit, where they are capable of receiving truth; every person is savable, but every person is not saved (Cf. Titus 2:11)

— Tragically, many will take the truth they have received and suppress it in unrighteousness (Cf. Rom 1:18), but this has to do with their free will/volition, not their inability

10 He was in the **world**, and the **world** came into being through Him, and yet **the world did not know Him**.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him. Yet the world did not recognize him.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

- This is a reference to Christ's pre-Incarnate work (Col 1:16; Heb 1:2)

— John is very clear that the pre-Incarnate Christ is the Creator of all things (1:3)

- "...world" [3x] - *cosmos*, first 2x refers to the world and everything in it; the last usage refers to the people in the world who came in contact with Jesus

— Even though the same Greek word is used (*cosmos*) in all three instances in this verse, the scope of each is different based on the immediate context and other passages

— Jesus created the earth as a home, but when He visited it, He found it inhabited by people who refused to acknowledge Him for who He was

- "...the world did not know Him" - Jesus' two great works: the Creation of all things and the redemption of mankind. Yet His creation did not accept Him.

— To reject Jesus Christ is to reject the One who created you, to reject the One who sustains your very life, and it is to reject the One, as the second member of the Trinity did everything that could be done to secure your salvation.

— Rejection of Jesus Christ is the most foolish endeavor you could ever give yourself to in this life

11 He came to **His own**, and His own people **did not accept Him**.

11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

11 He came to his own creation, yet his own people did not receive him.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

- "...His own" - the Jews

— The great tragedy of the NT is that Jesus was rejected by His own elect and chosen nation (19:15)

- "...did not accept Him" - the tragedy of Israel's history (Matt 12:24ff; 23:37-39; Cf. Deut 7:6; Luke 19:14; John 19:15; Rom 3:1-2; 9:4-5)

— The Bible consistently puts the responsibility to believe on man, not on God (Cf. 3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47; Acts 16:31; Rom 3:21-22,25-26; 4:3-6; Eph 2:8. The Bible also consistently puts the responsibility for not believing on man (Cf. 3:18; 5:40).

12 But **as many as received Him**, to them He gave the **right** to become **children of God**, to those who **believe in His name**,

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,

12 However, to all who received him, those believing in his name, he gave authority to become God's children,

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

- "...as many as received Him" - a minority of people, a small remnant, trusted in Jesus Christ...

— They were dismissed and ridiculed, persecuted, by the majority of unbelieving Israel

— Jesus in John's Gospel identifies this remnant and begins to disciple them and work in their lives to prepare them for a new work of God that begins in Acts 2, the Church

— The Church Age is a time, for the last 2000 years, where God has put Israel on the shelf and God has chosen to work through Gentiles (and a minority of Jews), those who have trusted in the very Messiah that Israel rejected

— "received" - *lambano*, a synonym for belief (different word, same meaning)

— The operative word for salvation throughout the Bible is *believe*. Sometimes other words, such as "receive" are used as synonyms.

— In that day, to receive Him openly as the promised Messiah and unique Son of God (9:35-38); believing therefore equals receiving

- "...right" - privilege; the highest privilege a human being is allowed to have

- "...children of God" - someone who has experienced a spiritual birth (3:3)
- Used to describe Adam (Luke 3:38) and those who are born again (Luke 20:36); also used of angels and of Jesus Christ
- When we're born again, we become a direct creation of God; we are no longer a "son of Adam" but a "son of God"
- Only the spiritual birth received through belief in the name of Jesus makes us a child of God
- It's not the fact that your parents are saved, not church membership, not your so-called good deeds, not your nationality, not your baptism certificate...there is one thing and one thing only that makes someone a child of God: spiritual birth.
- There are not Baptist Christians, Catholic Christians, Lutheran Christians, Bible Church Christians, or non-denominational Christians, and then born again Christians...there are only born again Christians because if you have not been born spiritually, you're not a Christian
- "...believe" - the one requirement for salvation (Cf. v7)
- "...in His name" - the name of Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven whereby you *must* be saved (Acts 4:12)

13 **who** were **born**, not of **blood**, nor of the **will of the flesh**, nor of **thewill of a man**, but of God.

13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

13 who were born, not merely in a genetic sense, nor from lust, nor from man's desire, but from the will of God.

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- Flesh and blood have no relationship to the new birth, which is spiritual and completely unrelated to physical birth

— Treating physical birth and spiritual birth as analogous is the same mistake that Nicodemus made (Cf. 3:4); Jesus made a clear distinction (Cf. 3:6)

— There are two different births, and any seeming similarities are only superficial and cannot become the basis of sound conclusions

- If you're born once, you'll die twice, but if you're born twice, you'll die once. If you're not born again, you'll die physically and you'll die spiritually, but if you're born spiritually, you'll only die physically, you'll never die spiritually.

— This isn't "seeker friendly"...if you are never born spiritually, after your physical death you will experience the second death (Rev 20:6,12,15) where you will be in conscious

torment for eternity. But if you're born twice (physically and spiritually), the worst thing that can happen to you in your life is that you die physically.

- "who" - the antecedent is those who believe in Jesus name (v12)

- "...born" - *gennao*, aorist tense; similar tense used in 3:3,5,7; emphasizes an instantaneous work, as opposed to a process

- In 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,5,18 the perfect tense is used, emphasizing an action that was completed in the past, but continues unchanged to the present

- "...blood" - natural descent; physical ancestors; genealogy

- Many Jews believed that because they were Abraham's descendants, they were automatically children of God (John 8; Rom 4; Gal 3)

- "...will of the flesh" - human decision or will; physical desire. No amount of wanting new life or striving for it will bring it. The only thing that produces new life is belief in Jesus.

- "...nor of the will of a man" - Calvinists camp on this expression and argue that God must first regenerate you before you can believe (the doctrine of Irresistible Grace). They think this verse bolsters their argument that God gives us the gift of faith before we are able to believe.

- However, they don't consider the context given in v12...notice "received" and "believe" are synonyms for faith in Christ. Verse 13 talks about what happens to those who believe in His name...once you believe in His name, you are born again and the Holy Spirit enters you, and this Spirit indwelling is not accomplished by blood, will of the flesh, will of man, but of God.

- It's the Spirit indwelling that v13 is referring to, which happens at the point of faith (after one is born again), not some gift of faith that God has to give you on the front end so that you're able to believe

- Those who believe this weigh heavily (exclusively) on the sovereignty of God, but they neglect the role that God has established for man to play, which is belief. No one is going to believe for you except you. God cannot believe for you, you have to believe on your own.

- God is going to convict me throughout my life, He's going to make me aware of my unbelief, but whether or not I choose to believe is completely up to me

- The Calvinist interpretation disconnects v13 from v12...they weigh God's sovereignty so much that they discount (ignore) the role of man to believe, which is clearly stated in v12

- God has masterfully designed salvation to be so simple and easy...He has done everything required, and all that is required of man is a simple response:

belief/trust/reliance on what He has done

(6) Incarnation (1:14)

14 And **theWord** became **flesh**, and **dwelt** among us; and **wesawHisglory**, glory as of the **onlySon** from the Father, **full ofgrace and truth**.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only **begotten** from the Father, full of grace and truth.

14 The Word became flesh and lived among us. We gazed on his glory, the kind of glory that belongs to the Father's unique Son, who is full of grace and truth.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

- "...the Word became flesh" - the eternally existent Son of God, Jesus Christ, became a human being (Man); we call this the Incarnation of Christ

— He did not just "appear" to be a man...he actually "became" a man (Phil 2:5-9), yet He maintained His full deity

— One thing to understand about the Incarnation is that it was an addition, not a subtraction and not an exchange. At the Incarnation, humanity was *added* to deity, there was no subtraction or exchange involved.

— The theological word for this is the "Hypostatic Union"...Jesus was 100% God and 100% Man

— At least 12x in the Gospel of John, Jesus is called "a Man" (4:29; 5:12; 8:40; 9:11,24; 10:33; 11:47,50; 18:14,17,29; 19:5)

— John stresses the Incarnation here to counter gnostic teaching that was seeping into the church late in the 1st century. It taught that the physical world was bad and the spiritual world was good. The gnostics in John's day believed that Jesus never had an actual physical body, it just appeared that way.

— The gnostics could not tolerate the fact that God took on human form to become a Man, since the physical world was bad in their eyes

- "...dwelt" - *eskenosen*, tabernacled (Ex 26; Lev 26:11; 2 Sam 7:6; Ps 78:67)

— To a Jew, the tabernacle was a physical, visible, tangible manifestation of God. It served as God's habitation (home) until Solomon built the temple.

— Just as the tabernacle represented the physical, visible, tangible manifestation of God on the earth in the OT, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ was the physical, visible, tangible manifestation of God to Israel in the 1st century

- "...we saw His glory" - the Shekinah Glory that filled Solomon's temple, and departed just before the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. That same glory will fill the Millennial temple one day.

— This is the same glory that Moses could not see, otherwise he would die (Ex 33:20), yet John says that we saw God's glory in the Person of Jesus Christ. So if John saw God's glory, why did he not die? Because the glory of God was veiled in the flesh of a Man.

— John was the last surviving apostle when he wrote this Gospel, and he was an eyewitness to the words and works of Jesus (Cf. 19:35; 21:19,35,24; 1 John 1:1-3)

- "...only Son" - *monogenēs*, "only begotten" [NASB95]; *mono* = one; *genēs* = species, kind. Jesus was "one of a kind" (Cf. v18; 3:16,18) because He is the only person who ever lived who is 100% God and 100% man in the same being.
- This is a very misunderstood and misinterpreted word: cults will often use *monogenēs* to argue that Jesus was "fathered" by God the Father, that He was a created being and came into existence at the Incarnation.
- The problem is, that's not what *monogenēs* means. If that was what John was saying here, he would've used the Greek word *gennaō*, as in the genealogies (Cf. Matt 1:2). The Greek word *monogenēs* has no connection to *gennaō*.
- If you don't understand the difference between *monogenēs* and *gennaō*, it's an easy trap to fall into
- Jesus was not created/begat, He was one of a kind because God added humanity to eternally existent deity, veiling the glory of God, allowing man to look at God and not die
- "...only begotten" [NASB95] - included in the notion of *monogenēs* (see note above); for "begotten" see note on 1 John 4:9
- "...full of grace and truth" - this encapsulates the uniqueness, the one of a kind quality (*monogenēs*) of Jesus Christ...He was full of grace and He was full of truth
- The Incarnation was the greatest possible expression of God's grace to mankind. It was also the best way to communicate truth accurately to human understanding.
- It's interesting that those people who are gracious struggle with truth, and those who relish the truth struggle with being gracious. People typically lead one way or the other, and are lacking on the other quality. But not Jesus Christ...He is exceedingly gracious while also being full of truth.
- Neither grace nor truth is knowable apart from God who has revealed them through Jesus Christ

(7) Testimony of John the Baptist (1:15)

- 15 John *testified about Him and called out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who is coming after me has proved to be my superior, because **He existed before me.**'"
- 15 John *testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"
- 15 John told the truth about him when he cried out, "This is the person about whom I said, 'The one who comes after me ranks higher than me, because he existed before me.'"
- 15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.
- In v6-8 we have a record of the ministry of John the Baptist, now we have his testimony...
- John's testimony is unique because he ministered before Jesus began His ministry, as a forerunner

- John was also conceived before Jesus, and he began his ministry before Jesus...so Jesus could've only existed before John the Baptist if He was the eternally existent Son of God. John was born five months before Jesus.
- John was also the greatest OT prophet, according to Jesus (Matt 11:11)
- So the bottom line is: if John was conceived before Jesus Christ, if he started his ministry before Jesus Christ, and if he was the greatest OT prophet, how could John say that He who comes after me has a higher rank than I?
- Because John was not the eternally existent Son of God. John did not add humanity to his eternally existent deity.
- "...He existed before me" - if John was conceived before Jesus, how could Jesus have existed before John? Because Jesus is the eternally existent Son of God, who simply added humanity to His deity at the Incarnation.
- In 8:56-58 while speaking with the Pharisees, Jesus declared to be the eternally pre-existent Son of God, having seen Abraham and in fact existed prior to Abraham. In the next verse, the Pharisees picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy (Lev 24:16) because they knew clearly that Jesus was claiming to be God.

(8) Grace & Truth (1:16-18)

- 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and **grace upon grace**.
- 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.
- 16 We have all received one gracious gift after another from his abundance,
- 16** And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.
- "...grace upon grace" - *charin anti charitos*, two possible interpretations:
 1. John may have meant that God's grace follows grace as ocean wave follows ocean wave, washing believers with successive blessings (NIV: "one blessing after another")
 2. *anti* means "instead of" (as it often does elsewhere). John may have meant that God's grace through Jesus Christ replaces the grace that He bestowed through Moses when He gave the Law. This interpretation may be preferable considering the context (the Incarnation) and v17, which continues this thought.
- It's possible John may have intended both ideas. He may have been thinking of God's grace in Jesus superseding His grace through Moses, and continuing to supply the Christian day to day.
- Demonstrates the super-abundance of grace that God has shown man, especially believers (Eph 1:5-8; 2:7)
- The glory of God that Jesus manifested was full of grace and truth (v14). From the fullness of that grace, all people have received one expression of grace after another.

17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

17 because while the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus the Messiah.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

- When the Law was given to Israel, it was a blessing when it was used correctly (as a guideline for living a righteous life in the sight of God) and instructed them on how to walk in fellowship with God

- When they broke the Law, the Law gave them provisions for righting the wrong through sacrifices, to restore their relationship with God (Cf. 1 John 1:9)

- However, the Pharisees saw the Law as a stairway to heaven, a means of obtaining salvation through works

- Through Jesus Christ, we were given a stairway to heaven outside of the Law, through grace and truth

- Grace was given through obtaining the righteousness of God through faith in Christ

- The grace of God is so great, and is being poured out today in an unprecedented way, that 1 Peter 1:12 says the angels are intently watching in awe and wonder to understand how God provided salvation to mankind (Cf. Eph 3:10)

- This statement shows the superiority of the gracious dispensation that Jesus introduced over the legal dispensation that Moses inaugurated (Rom 5:20-21; Eph 2:8).

- God designed the Law to demonstrate the unrighteousness of man and demonstrate the need for a Savior (Rom 3:19-20; Gal 3:10-14,21-26).

- The Law reveals only part of the truth, and was preparatory in nature. The full Truth to which the Law pointed came through the Person of Jesus Christ.

- Grace is God's favor and kindness bestowed on those who do not deserve it and cannot earn it

- If God dealt with us only according to truth, none of us would survive; but He deals with us on the basis of grace *and truth*

18 No one has seen God at any time; God the only *Son*, who is **in the arms of** the Father, He has **explained** *Him*.

18 No one has seen God at any time; the **only begotten** God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

18 No one has ever seen God. The unique God, who is close to the Father's side, has revealed him.

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

- There are many passages of Scripture that record various individuals seeing God (Ex 24:9-11; 33:21-23; Is 6:1-5; Rev 1:10-18). Those instances involved visions, theophanies, or anthropomorphic representations of God, rather than encounters with His unveiled spiritual essence (Cf. Ex 33:20-23; Deut 4:12; Ps 97:2; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; 1 John 4:12).

— The way we know what God is like is not by viewing His essence. No one can do that and live. God has sent His unique and only (*monogenēs*, Cf. v14) Son from His own most intimate presence to reveal God to humankind (John 14:6-12).

- God told Moses that no one can see His face and live (Ex 33:20). If that is true, how can man gain a glimpse of who God is?

— Answer: God becomes a Man, He becomes one of us, adding humanity to eternally existent deity

- "...only begotten" [NASB95] - *monogenēs*, see note on v14

- "...in the arms of" - a Hebrew idiom expressing the intimate relationship of child and parent or friend and friend

- "...explained" - *exēgeomai*, from this word we get "exegete" which means to determine the original intent, to rightly interpret

— Exegesis is attempting to get to the original meaning of something; it's what pastors and teachers do to the Bible

— Jesus Christ "exegeted" the Father...He brought to humanity the perfect representation of what God is like (Cf. 14:9; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3)

In the early church, there was a man named Arius who was teaching that there was a time where Jesus was not; that He is not eternal God. This was known as the Arian Heresy, which brought about the Nicene Creed to counter it (325 AD). The Arian Heresy is similar what what Jehovah's Witnesses believe today.

*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; **begotten, not made**, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the*

Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

II. Public Ministry (John 1:19—11:57)

We now enter the longest section of John's Gospel, which covers Jesus' public ministry. In this section, Jesus will perform seven miracles and give seven discourses/conversations.

(1) Presentation of the Son of God (1:19-51)

(A) By John the Baptist (1:19-28) (Cf. Matt 3:1-2; Mark 1:2-8; Luke 3:3-18)

(a) With the priests and Levites (1:19-23)

(i) Question 1: Who are You? (1:19)

19 This is the **testimony** of **John**, when **the Jews** sent **priests and Levites** to him from Jerusalem to ask him, "**Who are you?**"

19 This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

19 This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and descendants of Levi to him from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

- "...testimony" - notice the use of legal terms John uses through this Gospel: witness (1:7); accusers (8:11); convict (16:8); verdict (3:19)

— John uses legal language because he is expecting his readers to weigh the evidence very carefully, much as a jury would weigh evidence, then make a right decision about Jesus Christ

— John will give us plenty of evidence, but that evidence must invoke within us some type of response

- John's ministry at this point was attracting a lot of attention (Matt 3:5-6), so the religious leaders sent a delegation of priests and Levites to inquire about John the Baptist

- "...John" - John the Baptist; he was written about more in secular history than Jesus; he was a "big deal" at the time, and had a successful ministry

— He broke 400 years of silence from God to Israel

- "...the Jews" - is the author's title for the city's leaders (much misunderstanding has resulted from failure to grasp this synecdoche)

— "Israelites" is the author's title for people who were open to receiving Jesus message or believed upon and followed Him

- "...priests and Levites" - all priests were Levites; the reference to "priests" was to some smaller group within the tribe of Levi
- "...Who are you?" - they are asking "By whose authority are you doing these things (baptizing people)?"
- The religious leaders were getting anxious because some unknown man was attracting wide attention from all over Israel...they began to get concerned

(ii) Question 2: Are you the Christ? (1:20)

20 And he confessed and did not deny; and *this is what* he confessed: "I am not **theChrist.**"

20 And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

20 He spoke openly and, remaining true to himself, admitted, "I am not the Messiah."

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

- The second question is not given directly but is implied by John's answer

- "...the Christ" - the Messiah; the "Anointed One"

Key Witnesses in Jesus' First Week of Public Ministry

Day 1: 1:19-28 - Witness of John the Baptist to Jesus' coming

Day 2: 1:29-34 - Witness of John the Baptist to Jesus as Savior of the World

Day 3: 1:35-39 - Witness of John the Baptist to Jesus' first followers

Day 4: 1:40-42 - Witness of the first followers to their followers

Day 5: 1:43-51 - Witness of the first followers to their friends

Day 6: 1:43; 2:1 - Travel to Galilee (events not given)

Day 7: 2:1-11 - Witness of the first miraculous sign

(iii) Question 3: Are you Elijah? (1:21a)

(iv) Question 4: Are you the Prophet? (1:21b)

21 And so they asked him, "What then? **Are you Elijah?**" And he *said, "I am not." "Are you **theProphet?**" And he answered, "No."

21 They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he *said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

21 So they asked him, "Well then, are you Elijah?" John said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

- At the time John the Baptist ministered, there was already a heightened expectation of the Messiah

- The religious leaders knew this because of the prophecy of Dan 9:25, which gave a 483 year time period between a decree to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (which happened in 444 BC, Neh 2)
- This is why in early Luke, there are prophets like Anna (Luke 2:36-38) and Simeon (Luke 2:25-27) waiting in the temple for the coming Messiah. They were aware of Daniel's prophecy and had a messianic expectation.
- "...Are you Elijah?" - the Jews had an expectation of Elijah coming alongside the Messiah, based on a prophecy from Mal 4:5-6
- That expectation continues to today...the Jews will often set out a chair in their homes, especially during Passover, called Elijah's chair, because they are waiting for Elijah to come
- So based on their interpretation of Mal 4:5-6 and the heightened messianic expectation at the time, the Jews thought that John the Baptist may be Elijah
- The curious thing is...John the Baptist could've been "Elijah" to Israel had they accepted Jesus as their Messiah. John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17; Matt 11:13-14).
- But we've already learned (v11) that the Messiah came to His own (Israel) and they rejected Him, thus the prophecies of Elijah (Mal 4:5-6) remain unfulfilled today
- However, this prophecy will be fulfilled by Elijah himself during the Tribulation, in the form of one of the Two Witnesses (Rev 11:3,6)
- "...the Prophet" - this prophecy goes back to Deut 18:15,18
- The "Prophet" prophesied in Deut 18 refers to Jesus Christ, but the Jews during John's day believed that the "Prophet" and the Messiah were different (Cf. v25; 7:40-41). So when John denied being the Messiah (v20), they next asked him if he was "the Prophet."
- In 7:40-41 the Jews again make a distinction between Christ and the "prophet"
- But in Christian thought, the "Prophet" spoken of in Deut 18 points to Christ Himself. This is confirmed in Acts 3:22-23 when Peter spoke about Christ and how He came into the world to fulfill various prophecies, takes the prophecies of Deut 18:15,18 and applies them to Jesus Christ.
- "...No" - John denies being the Prophet, both in the Jewish understanding and the Christian understanding of Deut 18:15,18

(v) Question 5: Who are You? (1:22-23)

- 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? *Tell us*, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"
- 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"
- 22 "Who are you?" they asked him. "We must give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

- Well then, if you're not Elijah, you're not the Christ, and you're not the Prophet, then who they heck are you?

— You're attracting a lot of attention during a time of high messianic expectation, and frankly we are the religious authorities here, so we want to know who you are...

23 He said, "I am THE VOICE OF ONE CALLING OUT IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE THE WAY OF THE LORD STRAIGHT,' as **Isaiah the prophet** said."

23 He said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

23 He replied, "I am '...a voice crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the Lord's highway,"' as the prophet Isaiah said."

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah.

- Quoted from Is 40:3...

— Is 40 is a prophecy that the Jews would one day return to Israel after the Babylonian captivity

— It talks about a giant highway that the Jews will go through, created and ordained by God, connecting their place of captivity with their Promised Land

— John quotes Is 40 to compare himself to the highway of God, connecting unsaved people to Jesus Christ

— In 3:29, John describes himself as the best man...a best man simply introduces the bride and groom, then gets out of the way

- "...Isaiah the prophet" - completely destroys the trito-Isaiah theory (heresy) which believes that Isaiah was written by three different authors, and compiled into one book (Is 1-39; Is 40-55; Is 56-66). It argues that only Is 1-39 was actually written by Isaiah himself, Is 40-66 were written by one or two other authors.

— Liberal theologians have to do this because some of the prophecies in Is 40-66 are so profound, so specific, and fulfilled so perfectly (Cf. Is 44:28—45:1), that these "theologians" cannot believe that they were written before the events took place.

— The secular mind, who has no notion of the inerrancy and predictive nature of the Scriptures, has to come up with some type of excuse for not believing what the Bible says

— By attributing Is 40 to Isaiah (proto-Isaiah, not deutro- or trito-Isaiah), John the Baptist blows up this theory (heresy)

— Other places this heresy is blown up is in 12:38, where Jesus quoted Is 53:1 and v40 where He quoted Is 6:10; in Luke 4:17-19, Jesus quotes from Is 61:1-2 and attributes it to Isaiah

Isaiah Division Theory



Chapter	Division	Era	Time (B.C)	Century (B.C)
1–39	Proto	Pre-exilic	700's	8th
40–55	Deutero	Exilic	500's	6th
56–66	Trito	Post-exilic	400's	5th

(b) With the Pharisees (1:24-27)

(i) Introduction (1:24)

24 And *the messengers* had been sent from the **Pharisees**.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

24 Now those men had been sent from the Pharisees.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

- "...Pharisees" - first mention in John's Gospel; there were about 6000 Pharisees in Israel at the time

— John will use them as an example of rejection and unbelief throughout this Gospel. They will harden their hearts over and over against Jesus being the Messiah because Jesus challenged their authority.

— Jesus demonstrated that the rod of authority that the Pharisees kept people under was not God's authority, but simply manmade traditions

(ii) Pharisees Challenge John's Authority (1:25)

25 They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

25 They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

25 They asked him, "Why, then, are you baptizing if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?"

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

- When the Pharisees arrive, the questioning of John the Baptist gets a bit more intense...

- By their question, they are telling John that he has no legal or religious authority to be baptizing people

- At that time, water baptism was a rite that Gentiles did when they converted to Judaism. If John were baptizing Gentiles, the Pharisees would not have an issue with it...but John was baptizing Jews.

- This was a direct attack on the Pharisee's religious leadership because John was saying that there was something wrong about the religious establishment in Israel

(iii) John's Response to the Pharisees (1:26-27)

26 John answered them, saying, "I baptize in water, *but* among you stands One whom you do not know.

26 John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, *but* among you stands One whom you do not know.

26 John answered them, "I am baptizing with water, but among you stands a man whom you do not know,

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

- In John's response (v26-27), he begins to fulfill his purpose of pointing people to Jesus Christ

- John tells these Pharisees who were questioning him that someone Whom they didn't know, Who was standing in their very midst, was the *Christos* (Messiah)

- This was a divine revelation to John because John at that time did not even recognize Jesus (Cf. v31). The Holy Spirit had to point out to John the Baptist who this Anointed One was.

27 *It is* He who comes after me, of whom I am not worthy *even* to untie the strap of His sandal."

27 *It is* He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

27 the one who is coming after me, whose sandal straps I am not worthy to untie."

27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

- John says that this Messiah, this Anointed One, Whom he didn't even recognize yet but who was standing in the midst of the Pharisees...John was not worthy to do even the most menial task in His service

— This is how elevated Christ was over John the Baptist, who was called by Jesus Himself as the greatest prophet of the OT (Matt 11:11)

— In 1st century Israel, there were unpaid teachers, who were compensated by their students through performing menial tasks. But one of the menial tasks that students would not do is to loosen the sandal strap of their teacher.

— In fact, there was a rabbinical saying at this time that said: *Every service that a slave performs for his master shall a disciple do for his teacher, except the loosening of the sandal strap.* This was a famous rabbinic statement, our first reference to it was around 250 BC, but most scholars believe this saying was followed during the time of Christ.

— John is saying that the very task that is considered too menial, too low for a disciple to perform, I'm not even worthy to do, meaning that menial task was too high of a task for him to do for the Messiah

— This is a tremendous identification by John the Baptist of who Jesus is before he even recognized Jesus. He is fulfilling his ministry and at the same time strengthening his own authority to baptize.

— John had the authority to baptize, not because he was the Christ, Elijah or the Prophet, but because he was given authority by Jesus Christ Himself

— Have we lost sight of the glory and highness of God? Have we become so comfortable and accustomed to the grace of God that we have lost the fear/reverence of God? Do you look at Jesus Christ as John the Baptist did, as Someone so exalted and elevated that I'm not worthy to do even the most menial task for Him?

— In Luke 5:8, when Peter got a glimpse of the holiness of God, said Depart from me, I am a sinful man.

(c) Location (1:28)

28 These things took place in **Bethanybeyond the Jordan**, where John was baptizing people.

28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

28 This happened in Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

- "...Bethany beyond the Jordan" - not the common Bethany on the west side of the Jordan River; this is a city, unknown today, that was on the east side of the Jordan River

— So Jesus' ministry begins in an out of the way, unknown area; His ministry will conclude (John 11) in the other Bethany, on the west side of the Jordan River (home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus)

— John uses these geographical markers to demonstrate how Jesus began as Someone who was unknown, to Someone who was known. Very few people knew of Jesus at the beginning of His ministry, but everyone knew who He was by the end of His ministry (John 12).

— And as Jesus becomes more and more known, the accountability of those who came to know Him increased. The more light we receive, the greater our accountability to God to respond in the right way. To whom much is given, much is required.

(B) To John the Baptist (1:29-34) (Cf. Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22)

(a) Christ the Lamb (1:29)

29 The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him, and *said, "Behold, the **Lamb of God** who takes away the **sin** of the **world**!"

29 The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

29 The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

- "...Lamb of God" - Jesus Christ was the fulfillment and embodiment of all of the OT imagery and examples of atonement (Gen 3:21; Is 53:7, et al); Christ is the ultimate realization of everything the OT revealed concerning how a holy God can forgive sin, yet maintain His holiness.

— The great shock of the NT is to find out who this sacrificial Lamb is going to be: God Himself, in the form of a Man

— We learn that God is not just going to pour out His wrath against sin on an innocent substitute, but He is going to pour out His wrath on Himself

— So what happened on Calvary 2000 years ago is that the first Member of the Trinity, God the Father, poured out His wrath against sin on the second Member of the Trinity, God the Son. And as a result, we, through simple faith in what He has done, are exempted from the wrath of God.

— The great question of the OT is who is the Lamb going to be? And where is He?

— The great message of the NT is Behold the Lamb

- "...sin" - singular; it's not speaking of all of the individual sins that mankind has ever committed (although it does cover that). The reason "sin" is in the singular is a reference to the total sum of all of man's rebellion against God.

- "...world" - *cosmos*, Christ's death covers everything, every person who has ever lived and every sin that has ever been or will ever be committed
- There is no person ever conceived who hasn't been covered by this sacrifice, no sin ever committed in the past or present, and no sin that will ever will be committed in the future that is not covered by this sacrifice
- There is no subsequent sacrifice coming or necessary...Jesus simply paid for all sins for all people for all time. People who either don't understand this or don't accept this spend their lives in legalism, trying somehow to gain approval from God based on their performance.

The Progression of Redemption History

- One lamb for one person (Gen 3:21; 4:4)
- One lamb for one family (Ex 12:3)
- One lamb for one nation (Lev 16:15-16)
- One lamb for the world (John 1:29)

(b) Christ's Pre-Existence (1:30)

30 This is He in behalf of whom I said, 'After me is coming a Man who has proved to be my superior, because He existed before me.'

30 This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'

30 This is the one about whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks above me, because he existed before me.'

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

- John repeats what he said in v15 (see notes there)

(c) Christ's Baptism (1:31)

31 And **I did not recognize Him**, but so that He would be revealed to Israel, I came baptizing in water."

31 I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."

31 I didn't recognize him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

- "...I did not recognize Him" - John's assignment from God was to reveal/manifest the Messiah to the nation of Israel. He'll need some help from God to recognize who the

Messiah was, but his ministry was to point out the Messiah to the nation of Israel, ***thus it was necessary for Jesus to publicly identify with John's ministry through public water baptism.***

— Everyone who believed what John was preaching publicly identified with that message by submitting to John's baptism

— The way in which John the Baptist would recognize the Messiah is given in v33

(d) Christ's Identification (1:32)

32 And John testified, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

32 John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

32 John also testified, "I saw the Spirit coming down from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

- As noted in v31,33, John needed some help from the Father to identify who the Messiah was

— That help was provided in the form of the Holy Spirit, who descended out of heaven as a dove and remained upon Jesus

— This was the "sign" that the Father gave to John the Baptist in order to identify the Messiah (Is 42:1)

— In 1 Sam 16:13, the Holy Spirit came upon David after Samuel anointed him as king; the ultimate King, Jesus Christ, was identified and recognized by the Holy Spirit coming upon Him as well

(e) Christ as the Baptizer in the Spirit (1:33)

33 And I did not recognize **Him**, but **He who sent me** to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who **baptizes in the Holy Spirit.**'

33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'

33 I didn't recognize him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The person on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he

which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

- John the Baptist, just like all of the other OT prophets, called the wayward nation of Israel back to God

- *Those who identified with John's message submitted themselves to water baptism. Because baptism is an outward expression of an inward reality, and these people trusted in what John preached about a coming Redeemer, they were baptized.*

- *By submitting to water baptism, they were publicly professing that the message John preached was right and the nation of Israel in their Christ rejection was wrong*

- "...Him" - Jesus Christ

- "...He who sent" - God the Father

- God the Father told John the Baptist how to identify Jesus the Messiah...He would be identified as the One whom John sees the Holy Spirit descending and remaining upon

- This event is not described in John's Gospel, but by the other Gospel writers (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22), but only John's Gospel highlights this as something that John also saw

- "...me" - John the Baptist

- "...baptizes in the Holy Spirit" - John's baptism was by water (external, a ritual), but Christ's baptism is (will be) by the Holy Spirit (internal)

- In the Gospels, it is always mentioned as something still future (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33), and only mentioned by John the Baptist. He distinguished his work, baptism by water, with the work of the Messiah, baptism by the Holy Spirit.

- There is no record of Spirit baptism happening in the Gospels at all; even as late as Acts 1:5, it was still referred to as future

- Ezekiel prophesied that One would come who would not only clean up Israel on the outside, but also clean up Israel on the inside (Ezek 36:24-28). This prophecy was given to Ezekiel when Israel was outside the Land (during the Babylonian captivity).

- It describes a physical regathering of Israel, and the dual fulfillment prophecy was partially fulfilled by the return of the exiles after their release by Cyrus, but the ultimate fulfillment will be at the Second Coming of Christ. One can argue that the ultimate fulfillment is in the midst of fulfillment today, and has been on-going since 1948.

- *The cleansing described by Ezekiel, and the ultimate goal of God, is not some sort of outward cleansing or political restoration, is an internal cleansing, a cleansing of the heart, which only the Holy Spirit can accomplish*

- So John the Baptist is saying that Jesus Christ is the One who would bring about the internal cleansing of Israel one day, which was prophesied in Ezek 36:24-28. And according to v29, this internal cleansing is not just for Israel, but for the entire world.

- In this verse, we begin to see the contrast between John's baptism and Christ's baptism...

— The point of Jesus' Incarnation was not to get people to try harder, it was to cleanse people from the inside out. If you don't understand this, you've missed the point of John's Gospel.

	John's Baptism	Christ's Baptism
Water/Spirit	Water	Spirit
External/Internal	External	Internal
Negative/Positive	Negative	Positive
Cleansing/Imparting	Cleansing from something	Imparting new life

(f) Christ as the Son of God (1:34)

34 And I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the **Son** of God."

34 I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

34 I have seen this and have testified that this is the Son of God."

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

- This is the first visual testimony of man to identify Jesus as the Messiah

— By this declaration, John the Baptist fulfilled his God-given purpose for his ministry: to identify the Messiah

- "...Son" - in the OT, a reference to a coming political deliverer (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7)

— The political deliverer of Israel is identified by "Son" imagery, but John here goes well beyond OT imagery of "Son" and calls Him the "Son of God." He is not just a political deliverer, He is a spiritual deliverer.

— The title "Son of God" indicates that He has not come into the world just to solve our political problems

(C) To Peter and Andrew (1:35-42)

(a) A Divine Identification (1:35-36)

35 Again **the next day** John was standing with **two of his disciples**,

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,

35 The next day, John was standing there again with two of his disciples.

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

- "...the next day" - a textual marker to show a change in scene and topic

— The previous day is when Jesus showed up to be baptized by John the Baptist and John identified Him based on the identification by the Holy Spirit

- "...two of his disciples" - two of John the Baptist's disciples

— These two disciples are Andrew (v40) and an unnamed disciple (possibly John the Apostle); the scene is still in Bethany beyond the Jordan

36 and **he** looked at Jesus as He walked, and *said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God!**"

36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

36 As he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

- "...he" - John the Baptist

- "...Behold, the Lamb of God!" - see notes on v29 for the meaning/background for this declaration

(b) A Divine Question (1:37-38)

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they **followed** Jesus.

37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

- These two disciples, Andrew and an unnamed disciple, once they heard Jesus speak, they immediately left John and followed Jesus

— This is exactly John's ministry...to point people to Christ. John showed these two disciples a higher reality in Christ, so they left John's ministry and began to follow Jesus.

- "...followed" - *akolouthēō*, simply walked after, they accompanied Him. They are *becoming* believers at this point, but they are not yet disciples. They are simply walking around with Jesus, learning, seeking. After following Jesus for a time, they returned to fishing in Capernaum.

— They don't become disciples until Matt 4:18-19 (Mark 1:16-18). The "following" described here is event #20 in the life of Christ; Jesus calling them to be disciples (Matt 4:18-19) is event #35 in the life of Christ.

— So the order is that a person becomes saved (justification) and then they begin to grow in Christ. During the maturing process comes discipleship, where we begin to submit to Christ, not under the power of our own flesh, but by the power of the Holy Spirit (sanctification). This is when we become usable for Christ.

— This is the same pattern in the OT...the nation of Israel was redeemed (justified) at the Passover (confirmed by Ex 14:30-31), when they by faith took the blood of the Passover Lamb and applied it to the doorposts. The wrath of God in plague #10 "passed over" Israel. Then they left Egypt, crossed through the Red Sea, and a two month period of time passes.

— In the third month after their Exodus from Egypt (Ex 19:1), God brought them to Mount Sinai to give them the Law. The Law was given to show a redeemed (saved) people how to live, how to relate to God and how to relate to each other. The Law was not given to redeem Israel (they were already redeemed at Passover), but to a redeemed nation, who had already expressed faith in Jesus Christ.

38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and *said to them, **"What are you seeking?"** They said to Him, **"Rabbi(which translated means Teacher),** where are You **staying?"**

38 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?"

38 But when Jesus turned around and saw them following, he asked them, **"What are you looking for?"** They asked him, "Rabbi," (which is translated "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, **What seek ye?** They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

- "...What are you seeking?" - interesting that Jesus didn't ask them "Who" are you seeking, but "What" are you seeking

— There was obviously some initial attraction of these two disciples to Jesus as they began to follow Him

— They are not yet in faith, but they are "seekers" and Jesus asks them "What" they are seeking

- This is a relevant question for Jesus to ask because many people come to Christ with the wrong motivation...they think Jesus is going to make them rich (prosperity gospel) or heal them from sickness and when He doesn't, and when their expectations are not met, they become disillusioned because Jesus never promised to make anyone rich or heal every sickness, and they fall away

— Judas went through this exact process...he was a professor but never a possessor.

Judas hung around Jesus because He was talking about a kingdom, which Judas expected to materialize right away, and thought he would have a position of authority in that kingdom (Matt 20:20-21). Judas hung in there long enough to figure out the kingdom was not going to materialize at that time, then he sold out thinking I've wasted enough time with this guy Jesus, I've got to get something out of this deal, then betrayed Him for 30 pieces of silver.

— Many of Jesus "followers" were the same way...in 6:15 after Jesus fed the 5000, He withdrew from the crowd by Himself because they intended to take Him by force and make

Him king. Jesus then calls them out (6:26) for following Him only for what He could do for them (feed/provide for them) politically, not spiritually. Then in 6:66, many of His disciples withdrew and did not walk with Him any longer.

— John 6 is a sermon on how to empty a church, which is in contrast to what many church seminars teach today, which is how to fill a church up. If Jesus spoke at any of these seminars, He'd be a huge disappointment because there is more to it than just meeting your physical needs...you have to trust. We have to come to Christ because of who He is, not based on some sort of false expectation we have of Him.

— This is why Jesus asked Andrew and the other (unnamed) disciple what their motive was for walking after (following) Him

- "...Rabbi" - a teacher of spiritual truth

— It appears that they began to follow Christ because of an unmet spiritual void in their lives that they have recognized

- "... (which translated means Teacher)" - John gives a parenthetical statement on who a Rabbi is, which is further confirmation that John is writing to a primarily Gentile audience, since Jews would have no need for this type of explanation

— He does this 3x in this chapter (v38,41,42)

- "...staying" - *menō*, reside and abide; this verb is used 40x in John's Gospel and is loaded with theological meaning

— It speaks of an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ; the use of this verb implies that these two followers sought a more intimate relationship with Jesus, not just superficial trying to get their physical needs met

— *These men may have been wondering if that type of relationship with Jesus Christ might be possible for them.* [Constable]

(c) A Divine Invitation (1:39)

39 He *said to them, **"Come, and you will see."** So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day; it was about the **tenth hour**.

39 He *said to them, **"Come, and you will see."** So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

39 He told them, **"Come and see!"** So they went and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

39 He saith unto them, **Come and see.** They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

- Walking with Jesus Christ is a good way to determine whether or not your motives for following Him are pure...when you're walking with Him, He won't try to fool you as to what He has promised you. He will present Himself to you exactly as He is.

- The more you're following Him, the more you're comparing your impurity to His purity, the more accurate picture we get of what we seek from Jesus (our motives)
- Are you coming to Christ based on a false expectation, based upon a caricature of Him that is not true, or are you coming to Him, poverty-stricken as sinful human beings, recognizing our bankruptcy before Him? Not on our own terms, but on His terms.
- "...tenth hour" - 4pm

(d) Divinely Motivated Evangelism (1:40-42a)

40 One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

40 One of the two who heard John *speak* and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first **found* his own brother Simon and **said* to him, "We have found the **Messiah**" (which translated means Christ).

41 He **found* first his own brother Simon and **said* to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).

41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and say to him, "We have found the Anointed One!" (which is translated "Messiah").

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

- "...Messiah" - Andrew's knowledge and understanding of Jesus is growing quickly...He was a "Rabbi" in v38, then after spending the day with Jesus, Andrew acknowledges Him as the Messiah (v41)

— Andrew now understands that Jesus is the Messiah who was predicted throughout the OT. This is a *massive* discovery by Andrew.

42 **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**).

42 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).

42 He led Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him intently and said, "**You are Simon, John's son. You will be called Cephas!**" (which is translated "Peter").

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, **Thou art Simon the son of Jonah: thou shalt be called Cephas**, which is by interpretation, A stone.

- "He brought him to Jesus" - after Andrew came to the realization that Jesus was the Messiah, his first act is evangelism...he brought his brother Peter to see Jesus

- There is no better example of evangelism than bringing people to Christ and offering Christ to people on Christ's terms. No glitzy church programs or outreaches, just simply come and see. Helping people understand what we already understand.

- Andrew is not mentioned often in the gospels, but when he is mentioned, he is always bringing people to Christ (here; 6:8-9; 12:20-22)

- In bringing his brother Peter to see Jesus Christ, no man did the church a greater service than Andrew [Bible Knowledge Commentary]. Peter is much more prominent in what he did for the Lord than Andrew, but if you don't have Andrew, you don't have Peter.

- Everyone knows Billy Graham, but nobody knows Mordecai Ham (who led Billy Graham to Christ)

- New believers should never underestimate their ability to bring people to Christ because many people who have been Christians for a long time do not have those non-believing contacts any more because we've removed ourselves from the world system. New believers don't have that problem...they still have unbelievers all around them.

- In the Bible, the name a person receives is a revelation of their divine destiny (in Gen 17:5 God changed Abram to Abraham because he would be the father of many nations, even though he had no heir at that time) (Cf. Jacob, Gen 32:26)

- God saw Abraham not by what he was at that time, but what Abraham would become in God

- When God looks at your life today, He does not see you based on who you are, but on the potential for you to become in God

- "...Cephas" - *kēphas*, a Aramaic expression meaning "rock" or "stone"

- "...Peter" - *petros*, a Greek expression meaning "little rock" or "stone"

- It's important to understand that *petros* is the Greek name, not *petra* when interpreting Matt 16:18...Jesus didn't say He was going to build the church on Peter (*petros*), but rather on Peter's confession (*petra*) of who Jesus is

- It's good Jesus didn't build the church on Peter because a short time later Peter would deny Jesus three times. Just a few verses later in Matt 16, the next words Peter will say after his confession of Christ were from Satan.

- The concept of a "rock" is something that is stable, immovable. Peter probably heard the Lord say that about him and thought Jesus had the wrong guy because Peter was anything but stable throughout the gospels...he'd walk out onto the water, take his eyes off of Jesus, and start to sink.

- But thankfully for Peter and for all believers, Christ doesn't see us for who we are right now, but who we can become in Him
- The potential of every child of God to achieve great things is astronomical, but we so often sell ourselves short because we are clinging to our old identity. In our new identity with God, all things are possible.

(D) To Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51)

(a) Philip Believes (1:43-44)

43 The **next day** He decided to go to **Galilee**, and He *found Philip. And Jesus *said to him, **"Follow Me."**

43 The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He *found Philip. And Jesus *said to him, **"Follow Me."**

43 The next day, Jesus decided to go away to Galilee, where he found Philip and told him, **"Follow me."**

43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, **Follow me.**

- "...next day" - a textual marker on timing...

— The day before this day was the conversation with Andrew, the unnamed disciple, and Peter (v35-42), also at Bethany beyond the Jordan

— The day before that was the recognition of the Christ by the John the Baptist and the baptism of Christ, at Bethany beyond the Jordan

— Three days earlier was the Q&A session between the priests, scribes and Pharisees with John the Baptist

- "...He" - capitalized, indicating Jesus made the decision, but when scholars look at the Greek, it's not completely clear. Many reputable scholars believe it was Andrew who made the decision.

— Everyone in this chapter comes to faith in Christ at the invitation of someone else besides Christ

— It makes sense that Andrew would initiate this move to Bethsaida since it was his (and Peter's) hometown

— It is also consistent with Andrew's pattern of always bringing people to Christ (see note on v42)

- "...Galilee" - after the events in Bethany beyond the Jordan (v28-42), the scene now shifts north to the Galilee region, specifically in Bethsaida (v44)

— It is here that Christ will reveal Himself to the next two men who will eventually become His disciples: Philip (v43-44) and Nathanael (v45-46)

- "...Follow Me" - don't read too much into this phrase...just take it literally: Jesus was walking along with others, and He told Philip to follow Him in close proximity. He was asked

to simply walk along with Jesus, and we shouldn't load this simple statement with a bunch of theological meaning.

— Why make a big issue of this? Because the doctrine of Lordship Salvation is becoming more and more prominent in the church today...it teaches that the sinner who wants to be saved must not only trust Christ as his substitute for sin, but also must surrender every area of his life to the complete control of Jesus Christ.

— Lordship Salvation does not have one step for salvation (faith in Christ), but adds a second step (surrendering every area of your life to Jesus' control). However this contradicts everything we learn from John's Gospel, and subsequently Paul's epistles, about the means of salvation.

— So in Lordship Salvation, *sola fide* (faith alone) is out the window...you must also commit, surrender, yield your life to Christ. This contradicts what John's Gospel tells us 100x and what the NT tells us 250x...that the sole requirement for justification/salvation is belief in Christ by faith.

— Regarding Philip, all you have to do is read further in John's Gospel to learn that Philip is not yielded in every area of his life. At the Feeding of the 5000, Jesus tested Philip to see if he had the faith to believe that Jesus could feed all of the people with a small five loaves and two fish (6:5-7). Philip failed the test. He was in Christ, but he was doubting, he lacked faith in this situation.

— In 14:8-9, Jesus accused Philip of not knowing Him. Philip had been with Christ throughout most of His ministry, yet he still did not have a complete understanding of who Jesus was (he did not understand rudimentary theology). In neither of these instances did Jesus question Philip's salvation.

— Lordship Salvation confuses the three tenses of salvation, pushing sanctification into a requirement for justification, which is not biblical

— All that is happening now in the lives of Andrew, Peter and Philip is that they are coming into initial faith. As the biblical record continues, once they are in faith, Jesus will call them into service to Him ("I will make you fishers of men"). Becoming a "fisher of men" is not a prerequisite to be justified before God. Instead, it is a prerequisite for sanctification.

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

- Though the first disciples were from Galilee, Jesus had called them in Judea where they were with John the Baptist

- On His way north to Galilee, He called Philip to be His disciple

— Philip's hometown of Bethsaida was on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee. Also Andrew and Peter were born there.

(b) An Invitation to Nathanael (1:45-46)

45 Philip *found **Nathanael** and *said to him, "We have found Him of whom **Moses wrote in the Law, and the prophets***a/so wrote*: Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth!"

45 Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *a/so* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the man about whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote—Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

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.

- "...Nathanael" - many believe Jesus changed his name to Bartholomew because the disciple Bartholomew is usually paired with Phillip (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14)

- "...Moses wrote in the Law, and the prophets" - Philip's testimony to Nathanael stressed that Jesus is the Promised One of whom Moses (Deut 18:18-19; Cf. 1:21,25); and the prophets wrote (Is 52:13—53:12; Dan 7:13; Micah 5:2; Zech 9:9; Cf. Emmaus road, Luke 24:27)

— There can be no full knowledge of Jesus Christ without adequate knowledge of the OT

- Here we see the principle of spiritual multiplication...

- John the Baptist pointed Christ out to Andrew (v35-36,40)
- Andrew brought Peter to Christ (v41-42a)
- Andrew brought the delegation to Bethsaida and found Philip (v43)
- Now Philip found Nathanael (v45)

- Jesus is the only religious figure ever who had His life documented hundreds of years before His arrival, then fulfilled every word of that script to absolute perfection. No other religious figure has ever done such a thing.

— This "script" is what Philip is referring to as he's speaking with Nathanael. Jesus consistently used the OT prophecies to authenticate Himself as the Messiah (5:39,46; Luke 24:27,44).

46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good be from Nazareth?" Philip *said to him, **"Come and see."**

46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip *said to him, "Come and see."

46 Nathanael asked him, "From Nazareth? Can anything good come from there?" Philip told him, "Come and see!"

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

- At the time of Christ, Nazareth was an insignificant, maybe irrelevant, town. This is the impetus for this question from Nathanael...can anything big come out of such a small, insignificant town?

- Nathanael was also not clear on the divine program...he thought a king would come into the world in some type of glorious entrance. In God's program, the cross comes before the crown.

- In Nathanael's mind, if this Jesus was the Messiah, He should have some sort of grand entrance, and come from a more significant place than Nazareth (Cf. Matt 2:23)

- "...Come and see" - what a great answer from Andrew. Andrew could see that Nathanael had doubts, but instead of engaging in a deep theological conversation (what happened to the dinosaurs?), Philip just invited Nathanael to come and see for himself.

- What Nathanael needed was an encounter with God. Once a person encounters God, all of their silly questions seem to melt away. Philip didn't get into a silly argument about Nazareth, he just invited Nathanael to see for himself.

(c) A Miracle for Nathanael (1:47-49)

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and *said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite, in whom there is no deceit!"

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and *said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

47 Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward him and said about him, "Look, a genuine Israeli, in whom there is no deceit!"

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

- This was likely Jesus' first miracle, although 2:11 says that turning water to wine at Cana was the beginning of His signs

- The miracle here with Nathanael was a "mini-sign," a "prequel" to the main seven signs that John will describe in this Gospel. It was a precursor of bigger things to come.

- The miracle here is that Jesus demonstrated the ability to observe the motives of the human heart (Cf. 2:25)

- Jesus, through His omniscience, can look into the human heart and determine the motivations of human beings

- "...Israelite" - comes from Israel, which comes from Jacob; meaning of Jacob is "deceiver" (Gen 27:35-36)

- What Jesus is saying is that an Israelite, whose name means deceiver, is coming to Christ with pure motives

— At the time of Christ, the nation of Israel was living up to the character of their forbearer Jacob...it was a nation awash in trickery and deception. That same nation will later turn Jesus Christ over to the Romans to be murdered.

— But Nathanael was different, he will not be like the majority of Jews with impure motives; his motives for coming to Christ were pure. He was in the minority of Israel, not the majority.

48 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."

48 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."

48 Nathaniel asked him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

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.

- "...fig tree" - a fig tree in the Bible is typically used to represent a place of peaceful habitation. If you are resting safely and securely in your own home, you are said to be "sitting under your own fig tree" (1 Kings 4:25).

— Jesus through His omniscience could not only see into Nathanael's heart and motives, but (before being physically present) could see what he was doing in his house (in his life)

— So we're beginning to see Jesus' ability to know all things (omniscience). This is an attribute of God that will be demonstrated over and over throughout John's Gospel (i.e. 4:17,29; Cf. 20:27).

49 Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel!"

49 Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."

49 Nathaniel replied to him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

- On account of Jesus demonstrating His omniscience to know both what is going on in Nathanael's heart (motives) and in his life (fig tree), Nathanael confessed that Jesus was the Son of God

— This whole scene goes directly to the purpose for John writing this Gospel (20:30-31).

Nathanael's faith is a prototype of what John the Apostle wants to replicate in every person who reads his Gospel.

— Nathanael is being convinced of who Christ is in His proper identity because of the signs/miracles that Jesus performed

(d) A Promise of Greater Things (1:50-51)

50 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."

50 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."

50 Jesus told him, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than that."

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.

- Jesus appeared somewhat surprised at Nathanael's belief...if that little thing brought you to faith, praise the Lord, but you need to stick around because if you're impressed by that, you haven't seen nothin' yet

- "...believe" - Nathanael had moved from doubt into belief; the faith that Nathanael has at this point will become stronger and stronger as he witnesses the incredible signs that Jesus will perform

- "...greater things" - John's Gospel will go on to outline the seven signs Jesus will perform...these are the "greater things" referred to here, culminating in His resurrection from the dead

51 And He *said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

51 And He *said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

51 Then he told him, "Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, you will see heaven standing open and the angels of God going up and coming down to the Son of Man."

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.

- "...Truly, truly, I say to you" - the first of about 25x times Jesus utters these words; when Jesus says this, a big announcement is forthcoming that must be heard and applied

- "...you will see" - *horaō*, plural; Jesus is not just making this statement to Nathanael, but to all of those who are attracted to Jesus Christ because of this miracle, the entire remnant — The background for Jesus' statement is Jacob's dream of a ladder connecting earth to heaven (Gen 28:11-17), and he saw angels going up the down the ladder

— The purpose of the reference was to teach Nathanael and the other disciples that they would also experience supernatural communication confirming that Jesus was the Messiah

- "...heaven opened" - insight that people on the earth will receive because of what God is doing in heaven

- We don't know what God is doing in heaven or what heaven is like unless Someone who has been to heaven, maybe lived in heaven, comes to earth to dwell among men
- Angels are typically messengers from God, and what Jesus is going to do is reveal to mankind heavenly realities, things that we could never otherwise contemplate or understand on our own. These things will become a reality in your life because an Inhabitant of heaven has arrived and He will reveal heavenly things to the remnant.
- "...Son of Man" - the first time Jesus referring to Himself by this title. In the typology, the "Son of Man" replaced Jacob's ladder in his dream, signifying that Jesus was the means of access between God and man.
- The background for this is Dan 7:13, where the Messiah will overthrow the Antichrist and his system of government at the Second Coming
- Only the God-Man can be that ladder, that connector, between God and man (Job 9:32-33; Cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5)