



How Believers Come to Believe in Jesus

John 1:43-51

Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (John 1:49—KJV)

Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.” (John 1:49—NASB)

Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” (John 1:49—NRSV)

God uses different ways to lead people to believe in and follow Jesus. Originally, Andrew and John were disciples of John the Baptist; so, through their repentance and baptism John prepared them to accept Jesus when He came as the Messiah and Lamb of God. Some of what churches and Bible study groups do is prepare people to believe in Jesus. We do not know if Simon Peter was a disciple of John the Baptist or not. Peter may have stayed home and worked at fishing while his brother Andrew studied with John the Baptist. Peter at least learned about John the Baptist and some of John's teaching about the Messiah from Andrew when they were together. Then, Andrew introduced Peter to Jesus. Some people become Christians because they first learned about Jesus from members of their family or a co-worker; then, from further prayerful study they come to accept Jesus as their Savior. More unusual are those who become Christians as Philip did. In the Gospel of John, all we learn is Jesus walked up to Philip and said, “Follow Me,” and Philip followed Jesus immediately.

Philip knew about the expectations of the Jews regarding the Messiah, but something about Jesus meeting Philip convinced Philip that he needed to obey Jesus as the Messiah. Then, in the usual way, Philip told Nathanael that he along with Jesus' other disciples had found the Messiah. At first, Nathanael did not believe Philip. So, Philip invited Nathanael to come and meet Jesus. After meeting Jesus, Nathanael accepted Jesus as his Teacher (the meaning of Rabbi) and proclaimed Jesus the Son of God and the King of Israel.

Thinking Further

1. What is the first thing John tells us that Philip did after Jesus called him to follow Him?
2. How did Philip describe Jesus when he talked about Him. Was he totally right in his description? How was Philip almost right or almost wrong?
3. When Nathanael objected to Philip's conclusions about Jesus, what did Philip tell him to do? What can we learn from their responses?
4. How did Jesus describe Nathanael? How did Jesus say that He knew that about Nathanael?
5. After talking with Jesus, what did Nathanael decide about Jesus? Do you believe Nathanael was right or wrong?

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