

3. John 1:35-51

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Getting started

See if you can name ten different titles for Jesus mentioned in the New Testament.

If someone asked you why they should consider following Jesus what would you say to them?

Observation

Notice how this passage begins with John still performing his role as a witness to Jesus.

1. What is the consequence of John bearing witness to Jesus in verses 35-6?
2. What do the two fellows call Jesus when they first speak to him?
3. What is the first thing that Andrew does after hearing Jesus speak?
4. What does Philip do when he follows Jesus?
5. Who does he refer to Jesus as in verse 45?
6. Why does Nathanael have trouble believing Philip?
7. Why does Nathanael believe in Jesus?
8. What titles does Nathanael give to Jesus?
9. What are the even greater things that Nathanael will go on to see?

For Your Information

The background to 1:47-51 is found in the story of Jacob in the Old Testament. Jacob is described as a deceitful or guileful one in Gen 27:35. Nathanael is not like Jacob – one translation of this verse runs “An Israelite in whom there is no Jacob” – Nathanael was all that an Israelite should be and he recognises Jesus as the King of Israel.

The heavens being opened also has its background in a Jacob story – see Gen 28:10-22.

Interpretation

1. Why do you think John has gone into such detail and told this story the way that he has?
2. What sort of an impression do you have of Jesus at the end of chapter 1?
3. What do you think it means for the heavens to open and for angels to ascend/descend etc?

Implications

1. Notice that each person in the chapter that bears witness bears witness to their testimony to Jesus. If someone asked you for your testimony to Jesus what would you say – how would you explain his significance?
2. The disciples could say ‘come and see’ to the people that they talked to about Jesus – in the light of v 51 in what sense can we still say come and see to those who inquire after Jesus?

Prayer suggestions

- Thank God that he has chosen to reveal himself in Jesus, he Son of Man
- Ask God to help us to catch the biggest possible view of Jesus
- Ask God to help us to be clear and accurate in our testimony to Jesus.