

## Chapter Seven: Nathanael – the Guileless One

*Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel."  
- John 1:49*

- I. Some general observations about Nathanael:
  - a. In the four biblical lists of the Twelve, he is always called \_\_\_\_\_ which is Hebrew for " Son of Tolmai. John refers to him as Nathanael which is Hebrew for "God has given." So he is Nathanael, son of Tolmai.
  - b. Other than the four lists, Nathanael is only mentioned twice in the Bible: in John 1 and in John 21:2. According to the latter passage, Nathanael was from \_\_\_\_\_, the town in Galilee where Jesus turned water into wine.
  - c. Virtually all we know about him, comes from John 1:35-51 which describes his first \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ.
- II. His Love of Scripture
  - a. Philip's appeal to Nathanael to come and see Jesus, implies that he *knew* \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. It is interesting that Philip did not seek to sell Nathanael on the idea of going to meet Jesus on the basis of how Jesus might make his life better. Instead, he spoke of Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_ of Old Testament prophecies, because he knew that would pique Nathanael's interest.
  - c. Incidentally, it appears that all the apostles, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, were to some degree already true \_\_\_\_\_ after divine truth before they met Jesus. Compare with Rom. 3:11 and Acts 18:24-19:7.
- III. His Prejudice
  - a. Although he was a student of Scripture and a searcher for the true knowledge of God, he was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. His response to Philip's statement about Christ reveals what \_\_\_\_\_ Nathanael had for the whole town of Nazareth.
  - c. Nazareth was a \_\_\_\_\_ town. The Judeans looked down on the Galileans, but even the Galileans looked down on the Nazarenes.

- d. Prejudice cuts a lot of people off from the \_\_\_\_\_. John Bunyan understood this danger of prejudice. In his allegory *The Holy War*, Bunyan names the guard that Satan sets at the Ear-gate of the town of Mansoul, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. Philip suggested the right way to deal with prejudice: confront it with the \_\_\_\_\_ - "Come and see."

IV. His Sincerity of Heart

- a. His love for God and his desire to see the Messiah were \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Jesus calls him "an Israelite indeed." Jesus was not talking about his \_\_\_\_\_. He was declaring Nathanael to be one of the true spiritual offspring of \_\_\_\_\_. See John 8:39-40.

V. His Eager Faith

- a. When Jesus commends him for his sincerity, he at first responds in curious surprise: "How do You know me?" How could You possibly know what is in my \_\_\_\_\_?
- b. Jesus response is striking: it implies that Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_, both because He knew where Nathanael had been when Philip called him, and because He knew what he was doing there. He knew the sincerity of Nathanael's character because He saw right into him when he was under the fig tree.
- c. Nathanael immediately believed that Jesus was the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. Jesus then alludes to Jacob's dream about the \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 28:12).

That's all we know about Nathanael from Scripture. Early church records suggest that he ministered in Persia and India and took the gospel as far as Armenia. There is no reliable record of how he died. One tradition says he was tied up in a sack and cast into the sea. Another tradition says he was crucified. By all accounts, he was martyred like all the apostles except John.

What we *do* know is that Nathanael was faithful to the end because he was faithful from the start. Everything he experienced with Christ and whatever he experienced after the birth of the New Testament church ultimately only made his faith stronger. And Nathanael, like the other apostles, stands as proof that God can take the most common people, from the most insignificant places, and use them to His glory.