

John 1:29-51

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

29 What a declaration! The lambs that were sacrificed in the tabernacle and the temple worship only foreshadowed the Lamb of God who saves us from the second death. The lambs sacrificed twice a day throughout Israel's history only declared that one day God would provide His lamb who would be our substitute (Hebrews 10:4; Psalm 40:6-8). It is a picture painted of the Messiah by Isaiah in Isaiah 53:7 and used again and again in the New Testament: Acts 8:32; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6,12.

30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'

30 Jesus is pre-existent, eternal, and forever one with God!

31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."

31 John didn't know his cousin was the Messiah until the Spirit descended on Jesus.

32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him."

32 Seeing the Spirit descend like a dove and remaining upon Jesus confirmed that he was the Messiah (Isaiah 11:2). John was the greatest prophet because he was the one chosen to announce to the world the coming of the Messiah and to prepare the way before Him.

33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

33 God somehow revealed to John that this was the sign which would show Him who the Messiah was. But God also showed John that Jesus was the One who baptizes others with the Holy Spirit, the power to live a transformed life.

34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

34 Son of God was a Messianic title. Jesus pointed out that the word "gods" could be applied to those who receive the Word (John 10:34-36). The term was also applied to angels in Job 2:1, Adam in Luke 3:38, and Hebrews in Exodus 4:22. But in Jesus day people associated the title with the Messiah.

35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples. 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

35,36 The two were Andrew and John. This was John's second declaration of Jesus' mission. I believe this was at the time Jesus returned from the temptation in the wilderness. John the Baptist saw the Messiah not as a righteous warrior, but as a sacrificial lamb. This was an insight that had to have come from the Holy Spirit. Remember, the angel that announced John's birth said he would be filled with the Spirit from the day he was born (Luke 1:15).

37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 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.

37-39 Andrew and John begin to follow Jesus. When his disciples left, notice that the Baptist didn't say, "Wait guys! What about me? What about my ministry?" John the Baptist knew his calling was to point people to Jesus. The fact that they left John to follow Jesus is success for John. He didn't let the numbers game get him off focus. (John 3:30). He didn't let pride in his ministry keep him from obeying his call. The Kingdom of God isn't about building personal ministries.

They were most likely going to Kochaba, a city nearby that consisted of descendants of David. Official lineage records were kept there. Jesus invites them to witness His life before He calls them to be followers. We should be able to do the same.

40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

40-42 They believed because of what John the Baptist had said. From the beginning they thought Him to be the Messiah and wanted to tell those closest to themselves. Isn't that what we want to do when we come to know Jesus as Savior?

Jesus gave Peter the nickname, Rocky. Taking a new name became a standard of the first century Christian converts. They would see their old life as past and the new name represented who they had become. In many third world countries today, the practice continues as converts take a Bible name to replace their old identity. The old is gone, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

43,44 Five disciples were from this fishing village on the shore of Galilee. The town was recently re-discovered and seasonal digs have been on-going there. Last years

record lake level flooded the site which gives us an indication that the lake was lower in Jesus' day.

A successful student who had finished memorizing the Torah and studied oral law would find a rabbi that he wanted to continue his education with. It meant they would become the rabbi's disciple to learn all the ways and teachings of the rabbi. The student would inquire about following. If the rabbi accepted him as a disciple, he would say, "Follow me!" Philip was the first to receive this official call from Jesus. We don't have any record of him asking about becoming a disciple. The call may have come as a surprise. In fact, Jesus chose all His disciples and called them, though they did not feel worthy to ask to be disciples. (John 15:16) They may have all failed to memorize the Torah and so felt destined to be a part of their father's business. But Jesus came to them and called them as if they had been successful.

That is especially encouraging to me and I hope to you too. You don't have to have completed seminary or be in the top of your class. You don't have to have it all together for the greatest Rabbi of all to say to you, "Follow me!" What an honor! What grace and love! You aren't doomed to a life of meaningless labor; the Rabbi of rabbis has called you to follow Him. (Mark 8:34)

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

45 Did the stop-over in Kochaba include a visit to the records department that showed Jesus' lineage to verify what the Baptist had proclaimed. These first followers were convinced.

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

46 Speculation as to why he said this abounds. It was a small village of David's descendants, around 300 in population. Philip used the phrase that John and Andrew had heard from Jesus in verse 39. That is the way disciples learned, repeating the words of the rabbi in given situations. This was the first witnessing "method." "Come and see!"

⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

47,48 Nathaniel must have been a very devout Jew. Jesus could see his heart. Not realizing that, Nathaniel asked how Jesus could possibly know him. Jesus told him that He saw him under the fig tree. Israelites would often have a fig tree or two around their homes for shade and the caloric provision from the fruit. They would pray and sometimes read a scroll under the tree. Jesus must have seen in the Spirit Nathaniel taking time to meditate on God's Word and pray that very morning.

49 Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

49 It must have been an amazing time of prayer for Andrew's response included two Messianic terms from Psalm 2:7 and Zephaniah 3:15. I wonder if they were verses he was considering that very morning. Some extra-biblical Jewish writings applied the two terms to the same person (1En. 105:2; 4Ezra 7:28-29).

50 Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 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."

50,51 Jesus asked if that was all it took for him to believe. Then he encouraged him that he would see much more. When Jacob was fleeing Esau after stealing the blessing, he stopped at Bethel and went to sleep for the night. He had a vision of a ladder connecting heaven and earth. The Lord was at the top of the ladder and angels were coming up and down on it (him). It was a picture of blessings and revelation poured out on Jacob. He awoke and called the place the House of God, Bethel, and the gate of heaven (Genesis 28:12).

Angels are messengers. Jesus is the ladder between heaven and earth. The message of God comes through Him, the angels ascend and descend on Him, the one who is the prophet like Moses. You is plural in both cases in this verse.

Jesus was telling Nathaniel and us all, "You aint seen nothin' yet!" And fellow believer, whatever word Jesus spoke to your heart that won you, you aint seen nothin' yet! You will see greater things if you continue to follow Him with expectant faith.

What was true for Nathanael is true for us; if we want a connection to heaven, Jesus is it. If you want the flutter of angel wings about you, it comes via Jesus. Do you want to find the house of God, the gate of heaven? It's where Jesus is. Come and see! "How awesome is this place!" Jacob said. "Amen!"

Heaven opened and angels ascending and descending also pictures unbroken communication of the Father and Son. Jesus was the one man who lived a life in constant communion with God. We'll see that displayed in His actions and words. I told you John the Beloved doesn't pull any punches. He makes it as plain as can be. With the help of the Holy Spirit, he brings out every memory he had of Jesus making these marvelous claims. (John 14:26) Jesus is either the greatest con man the world has ever seen or the house of God and the gate of heaven. Not sure which? Hear Him say what he said to those first disciples, "Come and see!"

Questions

What are the implications of Lamb of God?

How did John know Jesus was the Messiah?

What was Jesus invitation to Andrew and John?

Why did the Baptist let his followers go?

What did they tell their loved ones about Jesus?

What convinced Nathaniel?

What Bible account did Jesus apply to Himself, and what were the implications?