

# Jesus commences public teaching – The first disciples



John 1: 35–51

*John the Baptist informed the people of the coming Redeemer. Two of John's disciples followed Jesus and became his disciples. One of them, Andrew, brought his brother Simon (later to be called Peter) to the Lord. The Lord knew him and gave Simon the name Cephas (Rock).*

2

*The next day they found Philip who also came from the village of Bethsaida as did Andrew and Simon Peter. He brought his friend Nathanael to Jesus. Nathanael was greatly impressed by the fact that the Lord knew him and could see into his heart. He recognized Jesus Christ as the Son of God and followed him.*

The children perceive that the Lord Jesus has tremendous power.  
As the Son of God he knows us too.

**N**athanael, an Israelite, is sitting in his garden in the shade of a fig tree. The air around him shimmers in the afternoon heat. He is completely lost in thought. He is pondering, as he so often does, the meaning of life. He would like to live his life in accordance with God's will. But who can help him in this? Who can actually tell him what God's will is?

Suddenly the silence is disturbed. The gate is opened and his friend Philip enters. "Philip, how nice to see you!" Nathanael hurries to greet his friend and embraces him. "Where have you been? You seem excited. Has something happened?" Philip's face is radiant: "Nathanael, I have experienced something very unusual! Even now, I can hardly believe it!" Nathanael looks at his friend questioningly. "Come, Philip, sit down and tell me!"

Philip is almost bubbling over with the news. "Nathanael, I have found the Messiah, the promised Redeemer!" Nathanael sits up in surprise. "The Messiah?" Nathanael and Philip know the old scriptures of Moses and the prophets. They know that God has promised a Redeemer who will help the people and pro-

claim God's will to them.

Time and again they have discussed this and wondered when this promise would be fulfilled. Would that time now have come?! "Who is it, where is he?" Nathanael asks eagerly.

"It is Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth."

"Jesus of Nazareth?" Nathanael asks wonderingly, and adds in genuine disappointment: "What good can come out of Nazareth?"

Nathanael is originally from Cana, a village in the vicinity of Nazareth. He knows Nazareth is a village like many others. But Philip does not allow himself to be put off. He knows his friend to be a serious man and urges him: "Come with me, Nathanael, come and see for yourself!" Nathanael decides to go along. The matter is far too important for him to disregard it. Together they set out to find the Lord Jesus.

1

Many thoughts go through Nathanael's heart and mind on the way. He has been looking forward so long to the day that the prophets' promises would be fulfilled! And now this Jesus of Nazareth might be the promised Messiah!

Jesus sees Nathanael approaching and says to him: "Here

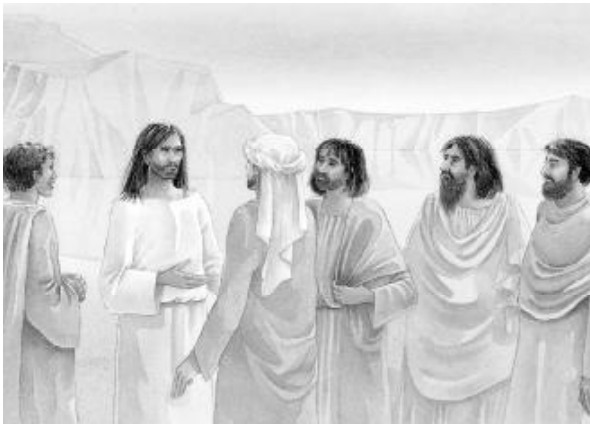
## Jesus Christ is the Son of God

comes a true and honest Israelite." Nathanael is completely taken aback and asks: "How do you know me?" Jesus answers: "Even before Philip came to you, I saw you sitting under the fig tree." A great joy fills Nathanael's heart. His doubts disappear. This Jesus knows and sees everything! He must be the Messiah! Deeply moved, he says to the Lord: "Master, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel!" The Lord Jesus answers him: "You believe because I have told you that I saw you sitting under the fig tree; you shall see greater things than these!"

Nathanael is very impressed. He feels the power which emanates from Jesus. Then he notices the other men who are standing with Jesus.

2/3

Philip explains: "These are Andrew and Simon, two brothers,



and that is James, Andrew's friend. They are all fishermen." Andrew now turns to Nathanael and tells him: "James, my friend here, and I were disciples of John the Baptist. You must have heard of him. He preaches repentance in the wilderness and baptizes in the river Jordan. He has told us much of the coming Redeemer and has prepared the people for his coming. He also baptized our Master in the Jordan. John the Baptist drew our attention to the Lord Jesus. We then followed Jesus and are very happy with him. Finally we have found the Redeemer for whom we have been waiting so long."

Now Simon, Andrew's brother, also speaks: "Andrew told me about the Lord Jesus and took me along to see him. The Lord recognized me as the son of my father Jonas. He gave me a new name. I am now called Peter. I immediately felt that Jesus was a very special man. I am convinced that he is the Son of God and am very happy that I am one of his disciples."

Nathanael has listened with great interest to all these reports. He, too, would like to follow the Lord Jesus with the other disciples. He is as joyful as they are to have found the long awaited Redeemer, the Son of God.

4

*The Lord Jesus travelled through Galilee. He found simple, faithful men and asked them to follow him. They became his first disciples.*

- 1 We discuss Nathanael. What is he like? (serious, not superficial, ponders on his life and God's promises)

Nathanael's reaction: He wants proof.

Reference to today: We tell our friends about our faith.

Their reaction might be: This small, simple church is supposed to be the divine redemption work?

We answer: "Come and see for yourself!"

- 2 Why does Nathanael believe? It is a miracle to him that the Lord Jesus knows him and has already seen him. We also experience miracles which strengthen our faith.

- 3 We look at the picture with the children. We use the picture to support our story as we continue. We learn the names of the first disciples and allocate these names to the different people on the picture.

- 4 We discuss Jesus Christ and his nature once again. He draws people through his inner power. He is the Son of God, still today he draws people to him.