

## **Commentary on John 1:29-51**

Recognize Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb, the Son of God, and the bridge between heaven and earth as you study this passage. Reflect on the transformative encounters of the first disciples and the fulfillment of ancient prophecies through Jesus Christ, that John was fully aware of.

### **The Lamb Who Takes Away the Sin of the World**

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

John the Baptist identifies Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." This declaration connects to Isaiah 53:7, which describes the suffering servant as a silent lamb led to slaughter. This imagery highlights Jesus' willing submission and His role as the atoning sacrifice for humanity's sins. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." Despite the immense suffering and injustice He faced, He chose to endure it without protest. His silent acceptance is likened to a lamb, an animal often associated with innocence and sacrifice, which foreshadows His ultimate role in taking away the sin of the world.

### **This is the Son of God**

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

John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Son of God, fulfilling the messianic prophecy in Psalm 2:7. "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain." This messianic prophecy points directly to Jesus as the Son of God. The installation of the king on Zion signifies the establishment of divine authority and kingship, which is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This verse underscores Jesus' divine sonship and His destined role as the Eternal King.

### **The First Disciples Follow Jesus**

*40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*

Two of John's disciples, upon hearing John the Baptist's declaration about Jesus, followed Him. At 4 PM, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was among them. Andrew then found his brother and told him, "We have found the Messiah." This marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry and the gathering of His first disciples, including Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, and highlights the early recognition of Jesus as the Messiah by His first followers. Their immediate response to follow Jesus signifies the beginning of their transformative journey and the spread of His message.

### **Can Anything Good Come out of Nazareth?**

*46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."*

Nathanael's skepticism is evident in his question, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" This reflects the common perception of Nazareth as an insignificant and unremarkable place.

Nathanael's expectations of the Messiah coming from a more prestigious location are shattered when he meets Jesus. Clearly many of the Jews were looking for the Messiah to come but how is it possible that a Messiah would come out of Nazareth? Clearly if Jesus is the Messiah, he is going to come from a better place than Nazareth. Nathanael was falling victim to his own expectations. This encounter serves as a powerful reminder that God's plans often defy human expectations, and that greatness can emerge from the most humble beginnings.

### **An Israelite in Whom There is No Deceit**

*47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said about him, “Behold, truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!”*

When Jesus refers to Nathanael as "an Israelite in whom there is no deceit," He is making a significant statement about Nathanael's character. This is a play on the name "Israel," derived from Jacob, who was known for his cunning. By calling Nathanael a "true Israelite" without deceit, Jesus acknowledges his honesty and integrity. This revelation deeply impacts Nathanael, as it demonstrates Jesus' intimate knowledge of his heart and character even before they met.

#### **When You Were Under the Fig Tree, I Saw You**

*48 Nathanael said to Him, “From where do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”*

*49 Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”*

*Jeremiah 12:3a But You, O Yahweh, You know me; You see me; And You test my heart's attitude toward You.*

#### **The Heavens Opened and the Angels Ascending and Descending**

*51 And He said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see THE HEAVENS OPENED AND THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING on the Son of Man.”*

This statement alludes to Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:12, where a ladder reaches to heaven with angels ascending and descending. Jesus identifies Himself as the ultimate connection between heaven and earth, fulfilling the prophecy. This vision signifies the commencement of a new era where the divine and human realms are united through Him.