

Seeing the Disciples through the Lens of Grace

3) Philip, Nathanael and Matthew

Philip

- ✓ **Like Peter and Andrew, Philip was a Galilean, from the village of Bethsaida**
- ✓ *The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me"* (**John 1:43**)
- ✓ *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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"* (**John 1:44-45**)

□ His Greek name suggests Hellenistic influence in his family or background

This may explain why certain Greeks who wanted to see Jesus, looked to him for an introduction

'Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus'
(John 12:20-22)



'Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little"'

(John 6:5-7)

- ✓ **God often brings the people to us He wants us to minister to. E.g. Good Samaritan. What God wants us to do is probably right in front of us. But, like the disciples, we can miss it if we don't have eyes to see it**
- ✓ **Jesus, testing Philip (from Bethsaida), asked where they could get food**
- ✓ **What happened to Philip, often happens in our lives. God brings people to us with needs to see how we will deal with them**
- ✓ **Philip probably checked the bank balance with Judas. 200 denarii = 6-8 months wages. They didn't have sufficient funds**



“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works’

(John 14:7-10)

✓ **The last we hear of Philip the apostle is in the book of Acts, at Jesus' ascension and the Day of Pentecost**

✓ **Tradition says Philip the Apostle preached in Phrygia, and played a significant role in spreading the gospel throughout Asia Minor, making an impact in this region**

✓ **He was martyred there at Hierapolis**

Nathanael (Bartholomew)

- ✓ **Nathanael came from Cana (John 21:2)**
- ✓ **Bartholomew was a family name, meaning, 'son of Tolmai'**
- ✓ ***"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see" (Jn. 1:46)***
- ✓ **Maybe he said this because there was rivalry between towns like Cana and Nazareth**
- ✓ **But possibly he meant, 'Can the Messiah come from there? Where is that in the OT?'**
- ✓ **Note, Philip didn't argue with him. He just said, 'Come and see'**

□ 'Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man"'

(John 1:47-51)

- ✓ **Nathanael prayed and meditated on God and His Word under the shade of a fig tree**
- ✓ **Maybe he was meditating on the account of Jacob, in whom there was much guile**
- ✓ **Jesus could see he was an Israelite in whom there was no Jacob! *'You are not a crafty manipulator'***
- ✓ **When you have an encounter with Jesus two things happen: 1) You have a revelation of who He is; 2) You discover He knows all about you. *'Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God!"'* (Jn.1:49)**

- ✓ **Nathanael had been deeply impressed by this manifestation of Christ's omniscience. But, Jesus said he would see greater things. The time would come when he will behold an open heaven, and the earth directly connected with it. He would see that to which in the far past, the dream and vision of Jacob had pointed: the ladder which linked earth to heaven, was Christ Himself**
- ✓ **Remember, Jacob received the promise at Bethel, *'In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'*. Heaven is now open. And just like the ladder, Jesus is the Mediator between heaven and earth**

- ✓ **Nathanael's transformation from a skeptical scholar to a convinced apostle demonstrates how honest agnosticism can lead to truth and faith, while demonstrating the importance of a personal encounter with Christ**
- ✓ **Church tradition says that Nathanael traveled as a missionary as far as Phrygia, Hierapolis, Ethiopia, Mesopotamia and Armenia**
- ✓ **He is considered the founder and martyr of the Armenian Church**

Matthew

'As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance'"

(Matt.9:9-13)

- ✓ **Matthias, which means 'gift of God', was originally named Levi before his call by Jesus**
- ✓ **We first meet Matthew in Capernaum, in his tax booth on the main highway. He was a dishonest tax collector, collecting taxes on imported goods brought by farmers, merchants, and caravans**
- ✓ **Tax collectors were notoriously corrupt because they extorted far and above what was owed for their own personal profit. They were supported by the Roman soldiers, so all complied**

- ✓ **When Jesus called him, his immediate response was to leave a lucrative career to follow Jesus**
- ✓ **When Jesus called him, he did not hesitate; he did not look back. He left behind a life of wealth and security for poverty and uncertainty. He forsook the pleasures of this world to be a disciple of Jesus**
- ✓ **He is one of the most radically changed lives in the Bible**

- ✓ **Matthew's first act as a disciple was to host a dinner for Jesus, introducing his tax collector and 'sinner' friends to Jesus**
- ✓ **Of the 4 Gospel writers, Matthew presented Jesus to the Jews as their hoped-for Messiah, tailoring his account to answer their questions. He has a strong emphasis on the fulfillment of prophecy**
- ✓ **Matthew was an accurate record-keeper and captured the smallest details. Those traits served him well when he wrote his gospel account some twenty years later**
- ✓ **He gave a systematic presentation of Jesus' teaching in 5 major discourses**

- ✓ **Matthew preached in Ethiopia, ministering to Jewish communities. He also established churches in Africa**
- ✓ **According to tradition, Matthew was eventually martyred for his faith**
- ✓ **His journey shows dramatic transformation:**
 - *from outcast to apostle**
 - *from a material focus to a spiritual focus**
 - *from a 'taker' to a 'giver'**
 - *from record-keeper to Gospel writer**