



The First Disciples

John 1:35-51

Notes: The *MacArthur Study Bible* by John MacArthur was used as a reference in developing this Bible Study. The Scripture references in this Bible study are taken from the New King James Version.

1:35–36 What happened the next day after John the Baptist first declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God?

John gave the same testimony about Jesus to another group consisting of his own disciples.

1:37 What did the disciples of John do when they heard John identify Jesus as the Lamb of God?

They followed Jesus. This does not necessarily mean that they became disciple of Jesus at that time but that certainly could be the case. Generally when the Bible uses the verb "follow," it usually means "to follow as a disciple."

Why did the two men leave John to follow Jesus?

They believed John's testimony about Jesus enough to investigate for themselves if what he said was true.

1:38 Why might Jesus asked the men what they sought?

He wanted the men to verbalize their interest in a relationship with Him.

Why did the men call Jesus Rabbi?

Rabbi means teacher and it is a respectful title. They were familiar with John as a teacher and John characterized the Lamb of God to be greater than he was.

Why do you think the two men wanted to know where Jesus was staying?

This showed that they were interested in being with Jesus long enough to get to know Him. These men were what we would call seekers today, they were seeking the truth about the Messiah and were willing to take the time to do this.

1:39 What does Jesus say to seekers?

Come and see. This is what we should do as well, invite the curious to come and see the truth about God...

Psalm 34:8 - Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

How long did the two men stay with Jesus?

Most of the day. The tenth hour is a reference to 4:00pm. The Jews divided the daylight period of the day into 12 hours (starting at sunrise, approximately 6:00 a.m.). This would make the time about 4:00 p.m.

1:39-40 Why do you think that the Apostle John mentions the precise time that day?

John mentions the precise time most likely to emphasize that he was the other disciple of John the Baptist who was with Andrew (v. 40). As an eyewitness to these events, John's first encounter with Jesus was so life-changing that he remembered the exact hour when he became sure in his own mind that Jesus was the Messiah.

1:40 Who was the other disciple of John the Baptist that followed Jesus?

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother was the other disciple.

1:41 What did Andrew do in response to realizing that Jesus was the Messiah?

Andrew told his brother that he had found the Messiah. It is natural to share great news with those you are closest to.

Why was finding the Messiah such great news?

The Messiah was the One that was prophesied to deliver Israel from out of the hands of their oppressors. He would be the greatest man in history and getting to know him personally will clearly lead to extraordinary privileges.

1:42 What else did Andrew do for his brother Peter?

Andrew not only told Peter about Jesus but he took him to meet Him. Actions speak louder than words so we should not hesitate to follow up our testimony with action.

What did Jesus do when Peter was presented to Him?

Jesus stated who Peter was and who he would become by just looking at him.

How was Jesus able to know who Peter was by just looking at him?

Jesus knows hearts thoroughly and also transforms a person into what He wants him to become.

What did Jesus say that Peter would become?

Jesus gave Peter the name Cephas which meant that the faith that He would give Peter would be the rock or the foundation that the church would be built on...

Matt 16:15-18 - He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you

are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

1:43 How did Jesus invite Philip to become His disciple?

Jesus asked Philip to follow Him on His journey to Galilee. Jesus is doing the same thing today, He invites us to follow Him in the work He is doing in the world through the church.

1:44 How can we reconcile the fact that Bethsaida is called the city of Andrew and Peter while Mark 1:21, 29 locates Peter’s house in Capernaum?

Bethsaida was probably where Peter and Andrew grew up. They probably relocated to Capernaum in the same way that Jesus was consistently identified with his hometown of Nazareth, though he lived elsewhere later (Matt. 2:23; 4:13; Mark 1:9; Luke 1:26).

1:45 How did Philip describe Jesus to Nathanael?

Philip referred to Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture.

1:46 Why was Nathanael skeptical that Jesus could be the prophesied Messiah?

Nathanael was from Cana (John 21:2), another town in Galilee. Galileans despised people from Nazareth. Nathanael’s scorn may have come from the attitude that Nazareth was an insignificant village without prophetic importance...

John 7:52 - They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

This attitude ignored the prophecy that the Messiah would be called a Nazarene...

Matt 2:23 - And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Later, some would contemptuously refer to Christians as the "sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

How did Philip address Nathanael’s skepticism?

Philip used the approach Jesus used for seekers in John 1:39 by inviting Nathanael to “*come and see.*”

1:47 What did Jesus say when He saw Nathanael?

- Jesus revealed something about His character showing that He knew him. By saying that Nathanael was an Israelite indeed with no deceit, Jesus was saying that Nathanael did not have hidden motives in his coming to learn about Jesus. Jesus knew that Nathanael was sincerely seeking the truth about Him.
- John MacArthur said:
The reference here may be an allusion to Gen. 27:35 where Jacob, in contrast to the sincere Nathanael, was known for his trickery. The meaning may be that

the employment of trickery characterized not only Jacob but also his descendants. In Jesus’ mind, an honest and sincere Israelite had become an exception rather than the rule.

1:48 How did Jesus know Nathanael’s character before they had met?

Jesus was God who despite His self-imposed limitations by being in human form, had supernatural knowledge.

1:48 What did Jesus say that told Nathanael He had supernatural knowledge of him?

Besides his pure motives in coming to learn about Jesus, He described the place where Nathanael was before Philip told him about Jesus. The reference Jesus made to seeing him may be more significant to Nathanael than it would seem to us, perhaps Nathanael had some memorable experience of communion with God at the location, and he was able to recognize Jesus’ allusion to it.

1:49 What conclusion did Nathanael come to about Jesus from their meeting?

Nathanael was convinced that Jesus had to be the Son of God!...the King of Israel!

Why didn’t Nathanael describe Jesus as “a Son of God, a King of Israel?”

Nathanael knew that there could only be One who could not be described merely in human terms.

1:50 What praise did Jesus have for Nathanael?

Jesus praised Nathanael for responding to the little bit of light God showed him about Jesus. Jesus went on to assure Him that Nathanael would see even greater things that would reinforce his faith even more.

1:51 What did Jesus say Nathanael would see?

The reference to “*heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending*” most likely refers to Gen. 28:12 where Jacob dreamed about a ladder from heaven.

Why did Jesus replace the ladder in Jacob’s dream with the term “Son of Man?”

This signified that Jesus was the means of access between God and man.

Why did Jesus use the term “Son of Man” for Himself?

This is Jesus’ favorite title for Himself. It makes reference to His human nature and has eschatological significance referring to Dan. 7:13, 14 where the "Son of Man" or Messiah comes in glory to receive the kingdom from the "Ancient of Days" (i.e., the Father).