



Sunday School Lesson
John 1:35-51
 by Lorin L. Cranford
 All rights reserved ©

Coming to Jesus



A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under [Bible Studies](#) in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser's back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material.

Quick Links to the Study

I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

II. [Message](#)

- a. [By the witness of a preacher, vv. 35-39](#)
- b. [By the witness of a brother, vv. 40-42](#)
- c. [By the witness of a friend, vv.43-51](#)

How do you come to Jesus? Our passage in John 1:35-51 provides several answers to that question: (1) through the witness of a preacher, (2) a brother, (3) a friend, and (4) Jesus himself. The calling of a set of brothers, and friends, Andrew and Peter along with Philip and Nathanael to discipleship forms the central emphasis of the two narratives in Jhn. 1:35-51.

In the text five individuals are alluded to as moving to discipleship commitment to Jesus, but the names of only four are given. The influence of John the Baptist on at least three of these individuals is underscored, and possibly implied for all five.

Yet, the pattern of response to Jesus is distinct for each of the named individuals. Not one of the four responded in exactly the same way. Andrew responded through the influence of the preacher, John. Peter came to Jesus through the witness of his brother Andrew. Philip came to Jesus because Jesus sought him out personally. Nathanael came to Jesus through the witness of Philip, who is a friend.



The implications of this are substantial. In our world, we each will come to Jesus in terms of who we are as an individual in our particular circumstance. But there will be common elements that typify everyone's response to the call of Jesus to discipleship.

I. Context

As per the normal circumstance, we will draw heavily upon past [Bible studies in the Gospel of John](#) for much of the background material. In particular the study, “Betrayal,” from [John 18:1-38](#) will be heavily used. New material will supplement this earlier research.



a. Historical

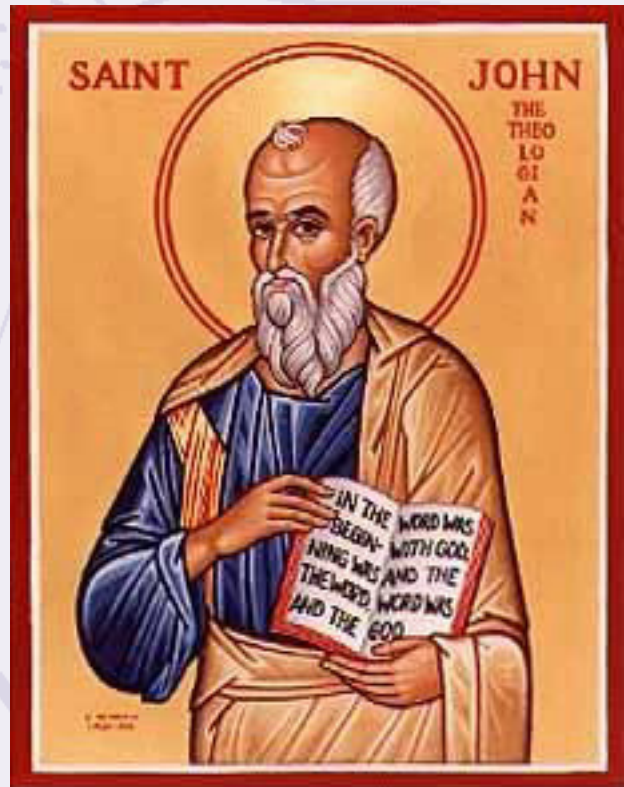
External History. The context of the fourth gospel revolves around the attempt to identify the time, place and purpose of the composition of this gospel. J.N. Sanders (“The Gospel of John,” *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) effectively summarizes many of these issues:

Written, according to tradition, by John the son of Zebedee, this gospel stands as the last of the four canonical gospels in the NT, consistently with its traditional date of composition; though some early MSS—notably Codex Bezae (D) and the Washington Codex (W)—put first the two gospels considered of apostolic authorship, Matthew and John, with Luke and Mark in third and fourth place respectively.

John was highly valued in ancient times as the “spiritual gospel,” first so called by Clement of Alexandria, and was perhaps the single most influential book of the NT in the fashioning of early Christian dogma.

Since the beginning of the period of modern critical study, however, there has been much controversy about its authorship, place of origin, theological affiliations and background, and historical value. Already in the late second century certain conservative and otherwise orthodox Christians, the so-called “Alogi,” denied its apostolic authorship. This was, however, on the grounds of its teaching, which they judged unorthodox, and not because of any authentic alternative tradition. In the modern period too, dogmatic presuppositions have played a considerable part, if not always consciously, in the controversy about this gospel. Conservative scholars have been at pains to uphold its apostolic authorship, and others to deny it, both sides tacitly agreeing that it constituted a bulwark of orthodoxy. It has not always been sufficiently realized by both parties to the controversy that to settle the question of its authorship would not necessarily decide that of its value. Even if it could be proved that it was not the work of an apostle and eyewitness of the events it purports to describe, it would not follow necessarily that its testimony is intrinsically inferior to that of the other gospels, and vice versa.

The real focal point of the controversy about John is therefore not the problem of authorship, but the question why it differs as it does from the other gospels. Only if the latter question is satisfactorily answered can



there be any hope of understanding the origin, purpose, and value of John.

In regard to this latter point, Sanders offers a helpful summation of the origin and purpose of this gospel that merits serious attention:

Whoever it was who put John in its present form and published it, whether he was its author or its editor, the Beloved Disciple or another, he offered it to the church and to the world as evidence for the claim that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (20:31), furnished by a selection of Jesus’ own acts—the “signs”—expounded in the discourses, and by the testimony of individuals, primarily of the Beloved Disciple.

There are six signs, one less than the perfect number seven, and, both by this fact and by their content, they lead up to the final and perfect sign, the death and resurrection of Christ. The first sign, the changing of water into wine, symbolizes Christ’s ministry as the substitution of the wine of the gospel for the water of the law; the second and third, two miracles of healing, show Christ as the bringer of life and forgiveness—the paralyzed man by the pool represents the sinner whom the law cannot save; the fourth shows him as the bringer

of the real manna; the fifth illustrates that “in him was life, and the life was the light of men.” by the curing of the blind man; the sixth, the raising of Lazarus, shows Christ as victor over death and prepares immediately for his own resurrection. The inner meaning of these events is expounded in the discourses, which are held together by the themes which run through them and give the gospel its unity. The fact that the main themes are stated in the Prologue suggests that the Prologue is integral to the gospel, which is, in fact, an exposition of its meaning. It is difficult to imagine the Prologue as an originally independent hymn to the Logos, subsequently attached to the gospel, though this has been suggested.

The discourses may well have originated in sermons expounding the “signs”: the feeding of the multitude and the discourse associated with it would be an appropriate Easter sermon, and, indeed, it may be that the association of the signs with feasts gives a clue to the occasions on which these sermons were preached. They were then formed into the gospel, and may have undergone a certain amount of rearrangement by the editor, thus giving rise to the phenomena explained by some critics as due to dislocation of the text (see § A2 above). The present order, however, is clearly intentional, even if it is not according to the author’s intention.

It is not easy to date the gospel at all precisely. Much of its material, even in the discourses, may be primitive, but it may have been gradually brought into shape during a lifetime of preaching, and the traditional date for its publication, late in the first century, fits the evidence of its early use by Ignatius. A man who was a youth at the time of the Crucifixion could well have published the gospel in the nineties when he was himself, as the tradition asserts, an old man, perhaps the last survivor of those who had seen the Lord.

Published at Ephesus at that time, the gospel must have been designed not only to remind the church of vital truths about its Lord, but also to win from the mystery cults and Gnosticism those pagans who sought salvation.

Internal History. The time and place markers inside vv. 35-51 play an important role in setting a background perspective on these events.

The time markers for each narrative are as follows:

For vv. 35-42, they include “the next day

again” (Τῇ ἐπαύριον πάλιν; v. 35); “that day” (τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην; v. 39); “the hour was about the tenth” (ὥρα ἦν ὡς δεκῆτη; v. 39).

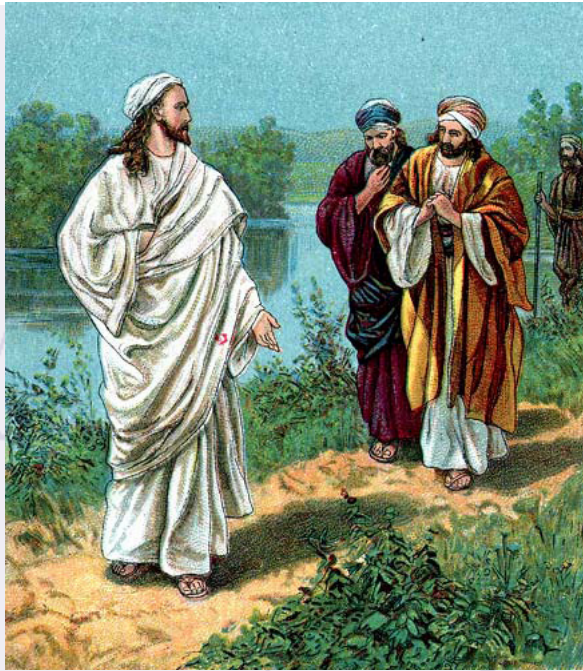
The reference to “the next day” plays off the first occurrence of the adverb Τῇ ἐπαύριον in verse 29. This is the reason for adding “again” (πάλιν) into this second instance. The natural meaning of the Greek term is “tomorrow” or “the day after the present one.” In the Johannine sequencing of events about John the Baptist’s ministry, he summarizes the essence of John’s witness in vv. 19-28, “and this is John’s witness...” (v. 19a). This was in response to the question posed by priests and Levites sent by the authorities in Jerusalem (v. 19b): “Who are you?” Another group of Pharisees (vv. 24-28) had come



to John afterwards with the question “Why then do you baptize since you’re not the Christ nor Elijah or one of the prophets?”

Verse 28 carefully notes that this all took place at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan where John was baptizing. The challenge with this place marker is precise location. This has been a difficulty since the beginning of the copying of the Johannine gospel. In the hundreds of Greek manuscript copies of the fourth gospel several different geographical names surface: 1) Bethany; 2) Bethabara; and 3) Betharaba -- among the most common listings. But the reading translated as Bethany has the greatest evidence in its support. The map on the preceding page identifies the two most commonly held possible locations of this Bethany. One is in the north just below the Sea of Galilee and the other is in the south just above the entrance of the Jordan River into the Dead Sea.

Clearly it is close to the Jordan River and on the east side of the river. This tag seems to serve in the Johannine gospel to distinguish this Bethany from the Bethany just outside Jerusalem where Jesus will stay with friends during the last week of his early life and where Lazarus will be raised from the dead (cf. 11:1, 18). Additionally, it is but one day’s journey away from Galilee (cf. 1:43). Archaeological investigation has not yet uncovered a site that can be conclusively identified with this town. Or perhaps it is a designation of a region, possibly that of Batanea just east of the Sea of Galilee. The mentioning of John baptizing at Aenon near Salim (cf. 3:23) because of the abundance of water encourages this understanding. Yet, the location of Aenon is uncertain. If this assessment is correct, then the occasion for John’s baptizing ministry at least on this occasion is near the Jordan River close to the Sea of Galilee, rather than just north of the entrance of the Jordan into the Dead Sea. Recent archaeological perspectives are tending toward identifying this with [Wadi Kharrar](#) in the modern country of Jordan. But this would place the location very far south of Galilee for a single day’s journey from there into Galilee. Thus, the exact location of John’s activity must remain a question



mark until new archaeological evidence turns up giving a definitive identification.

The next narrative, vv. 29-34, takes place on the day after the visit of the Pharisees. This centers on an encounter between Jesus and John. The location remains Bethany beyond the Jordan. The narrative is a monologue where Jesus is silent and John does all the talking. His declarations about Jesus are essentially twofold: 1) Jesus is the Lamb of God, and 2) Jesus is the Son of God.

The day following this encounter with Jesus, marks the time of the episode in vv. 35-42. Again with Jesus in sight, John declares to two of his disciples that Jesus is the Lamb of God. Once again the location of this episode is also Bethany beyond the Jordan. When the two unnamed disciples ask Jesus where he is staying he simply tells them to come with him and see where it is. They travel to that location and remain with him through the remainder of the day. The gospel writer indicates that this encounter with Jesus took place about the tenth hour of the day. In the traditional Jewish division of the daylight hours of each day into twelve equal parts, the tenth hour would place the time in late afternoon a while before sundown. Note also that the tenth hour is in the gospel writer’s perspective as “approximately the tenth hour” (ὥς δεκάτη). Interest in the precise timing of events will not develop in western culture until the twelfth century AD after the invention of clocks and the instigation of calculating hours in terms of 60 minutes.

Andrew’s subsequent bringing of Peter to Jesus evidently doesn’t take place until very late that evening, or perhaps the next morning before the departure from Bethany to Galilee. Here the timeline of the narrative becomes unclear. The place markers inside vv. 35-42 center on the unnamed location of where Jesus was residing during that period of time. Clearly it wasn’t very far from where John the Baptist was staying since it didn’t take long for the two disciples to walk with Jesus to it. Beyond that we have no idea about whether it was a “camping out” kind of place or whether it was at the residence of a friend. Later on Peter and Andrew’s home in

Capernaum will become Jesus’ residence for much of the Galilean ministry. But here we know nothing about its nature.

For vv. 43-51, the time marker includes “the next day” (Τῆ ἑπαύριον; v. 43) as the major time signal. A couple of lesser time indicators will surface in the conversation about Jesus seeing Nathanael sitting under a fig tree before he called out to him. This episode evidently was understood to have taken place during the day of the trip to Galilee after Jesus contacts Philip somewhere in Galilee. The subsequent episode, 2:1-12, will take place in Cana of Galilee and is situated on the “third day” either of the cycle of days beginning in 1:19 -- next day, next day, third day -- or perhaps better as the third day after arriving in Galilee from Bethany. Where Nathanael was sitting under the fig tree is not indicated. It was far

enough away from Jesus that human eyes could not have detected it. Nathanael understood it as a supernatural event.

This probe into time and place markers for our passage underscores a few important observations. The ancient world was not nearly as concerned about time and place references as we tend to be. Those references tend to be given with some precise identification only when their meaning goes beyond just the mere indication of time and location. Occasionally this signals a symbolic meaning of some sort that then places a role in the religious interpretation of the event. We will note some of this happening in our passage as we work through the exegesis of the verses below.

b. Literary

Genre. The larger literary **genre** issue is, of course, that of the nature of a [gospel](#) as an ancient literary form. Unique to the ancient world, this form drew elements from ancient history and biography in order to present the story of Jesus in a highly individualized manner to the initial readers of each gospel. Not only was each gospel writer concerned with recounting the historical life of Jesus, he was equally concerned -- if not more so -- with interpreting the religious significance of Jesus to his readers in ways that would help them serve the Lord better. This challenges the modern reader who has been trained to look hard for factual history in any biography. Lack of such undermines the credibility of the story and weakens any interpretation of the significance -- religious, political, cultural etc. -- of the central character in the biography. Thus for the past three hundred years plus in biblical interpretation the debate has raged back and forth about the historical reliability of the Bible. Yet, as the various “Quests for the Historical Jesus” have demonstrated over the past 150 years, once a “historical Jesus” has been culled out of the gospel texts, such a Jesus is no basis for the religious phenomena called Christianity that has transformed countless millions of lives as well as cultures for the past 2,000 years. Something essential is lost -- the living breath of God in the pages of scripture that can change and transform human life.

One must come back to explore again the nature of “gospel” as a literary form. The clue is not to superimpose down on to it the rigid demands of modern

historiography. Basic, general expectations -- yes. Rigid, empirical precision -- no. More important is the theological understanding of Jesus by each gospel writer -- something that Redactional Criticism taught us over half a century ago.

The passage itself is cast in the form of two -- and possibly three -- episodic narratives. Through them we catch a glimpse of activities taking place on two separate days in the early period of Jesus’ ministry. One took place on the east bank of the Jordan; the other the following day somewhere in the Roman province of Galilee.

Literary Context. The literary setting for these verses comes at the beginning of John’s story of Jesus. The fourth gospel records several events taking place in both northern and southern Palestine prior to the launching of Jesus’ Galilean ministry that the synoptic gospel writers highlight. For them Jesus’ baptism and temptation in the south prepare the way for formal ministry to begin in the north. But John has a different reading of ministry for Jesus. For a summary presentation of this see my [Summary Life of Christ page](#) at Cranfordville.com. The Beginning of Public Ministry in the fourth gospel covers 1:19-4:42. This includes the following [sequence of events](#):

7. [The witness of John the Baptist 1:19-28](#)

[Bethany beyond the Jordan](#)

8. [The Lamb of God 1:29-34](#)

[Bethany beyond the Jordan](#)

9. [The first disciples 1:35-51](#)

[Bethany beyond the Jordan \(vv. 35-42\);
somewhere in Galilee \(vv. 43-51\)](#)

10. [The first miracle at Cana in Galilee 2:1-11](#)

- village of Cana in Galilee
- 11. Interlude at Capernaum 2:12
major city in Galilee
- 12. The cleansing of the temple 2:13-22
Jerusalem
- 13. Interview with Nicodemus 2:23-3:21
Jerusalem
- 14. Further witness of John the Baptist 3:22-36
Aenon near Salim (location uncertain)
- 15. Woman of Samaria 4:1-42
well near village of Samaria in province of Samaria

What becomes clear is that Jesus spent considerable time in Galilee before the beginning of the public ministry there that the synoptic gospels highlight.

The most immediate context for 1:35-51 is the

preceding pericopes focusing on the ministry of John the Baptist. These two pericopes lay the foundation for the calling to discipleship of these four men. The role of John the Baptizer in the establishment of the Twelve is considerable.

Thus John's gospel will assert that Peter and Andrew had contact with Jesus prior to their summons to follow Jesus described by the Synoptic Gospel writers as taking place by the Sea of Galilee toward the beginning of the [Galilean ministry](#) of Jesus. For this account see Matt. 4:18-22 (Matthew's # 18 pericope) that is paralleled in Mark 1:16-20 (Mark's # 5 pericope) and in Luke 5:1-11 (Luke's #26 pericope). It is also discussed below.

II. Message

Literary Structure. The internal structure of vv. 35-51 follow a pair of episodic narratives centering first on the encounter of Andrew and Peter with Jesus (vv. 35-42) and then of Philip and Nathanael (vv. 43-51). Two men (Andrew and Philip) take the lead in bringing their brother and a friend to Christ (Peter and Nathanael). Andrew is clearly identified as a disciple of John the Baptist before switching loyalty to Jesus. This connection is set up in the first episode by Andrew being one of the two "unnamed" disciples of John who are introduced to Jesus (vv. 35-39). We never learn the identity of the other disciple of John.

Thus we will break down the study with a three fold focus on the two unnamed disciples; then Andrew and Peter, and conclude with Philip and Nathanael.



a. By the witness of a preacher, vv. 35-39

Greek NT

35 Τῇ ἐπαύριον πάλιν εἰστήκει ὁ Ἰωάννης καὶ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ δύο 36 καὶ ἐμβλέψας τῷ Ἰησοῦ περιπατοῦντι λέγει Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. 37 καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ δύο μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος καὶ ἠκολούθησαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ. 38 στραφεῖς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ θεασάμενος αὐτοὺς ἀκολουθοῦντας λέγει αὐτοῖς τί ζητεῖτε; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ ῥαββί, ὃ λέγεται μεθερμηνευόμενον διδάσκαλε, ποῦ μένεις; 39 λέγει αὐτοῖς ἔρχεσθε καὶ ὄψεσθε. ἦλθαν οὖν καὶ εἶδαν ποῦ μένει καὶ παρ' αὐτῷ ἕμειναν τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην· ὥρα ἦν ὡς δεκάτη.

NASB

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated 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.

NRSV

35 The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

NLT

35 The following day, John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36 As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and then declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" 37 Then John's two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place, and they stayed there the rest of the day.

Notes:

With the first two declarations in v. 35 we are introduced to John the Baptist and two unnamed disciples. John, on the day following his encounter with Jesus while he was baptizing people near Bethany on the east side of the Jordan River (vv. 29-34), stands again to make a statement about Jesus. The declaration follows in verse 36, "Behold, the Lamb of God" (ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ). [This label](#) is found only in the Gospel of John (twice; 1:29, 35) and in the Book of Revelation (8 times). The emphasis is upon Passover sacrifice in the Jewish temple system. And it projects Jesus' death as a sacrificial lamb. In the first instance in 1:29, the objective of the image is made clear: "[Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!](#)" In the fourth gospel, John the Baptizer recognizes the atoning death of Jesus whereas the emphasis in the Synoptic Gospels is that John preached a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt. 3:2 // Mk. 1:4 // Lk. 3:3). This declaration of Jesus' identity is made dramatically as John turned to see Jesus walking by. The gospel writer stresses it even more by the idiomatic use of the historical present tense Greek verb for "he said." To be sure this repeats what John had said the previous day about Jesus (cf. 1:29). In greater elaboration then, John identified his mission in relation to Jesus (1:30-31): "[This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.](#)"

John's declaration of Jesus being the Lamb of God is then abbreviated in this second use but implies the earlier elaboration.

This declaration about Jesus coupled with Jesus walking by when John made it caught the attention of two of John's disciples. Their curiosity pirked, they then follow after Jesus to ask him a question. Curiously we are not given the names of the disciples until the next segment beginning in verse 40 and then only the name of one of the two, Andrew. Of course speculation about the identity of the other disciple abounds and has so since the second century. Most commonly he is understood to be the disciple John for two reasons. First, in the Synoptic Gospel early call narratives two sets of brothers -- Andrew and Peter along with James and John -- are singled out for narration. Secondly, the assumed identity of the "[beloved disciple](#)" otherwise unnamed in the fourth gospel as the apostle John points in this direction. But all is speculation and has no clear basis in the



scripture text itself.

When the two disciples catch up to Jesus, he turns around and looks intently at them as they follow after him. "What do you seek?" he asks them. They answer, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" He then invites them to follow him with the words, "Come and you will see."

Jesus' question to them is simple enough. He sees these two disciples of John coming behind him and after sizing them up asks them what they want from him. In the theological echoes that almost all the words of the fourth gospel contains we perhaps find a challenge from Jesus to each of us. What do we seek from him? Some desires can be legitimate, while others may not be. But he takes the lead in finding out what we want. Then he can decide how to respond to our requests.

Their response is loaded with implications. First, they call him Rabbi. This was the Aramaic term for master. One must note something here. The modern term rabbi means one with Jewish seminary training and ordination providing certification to conduct sabbath services, circumcise newborns, and teach the Hebrew Bible. The beginnings of the Jewish rabbinate reach back to the end of the first Christian century after the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. Prior to that trained teachers of the Law were known as scribes. The use of term here underscores the perception of Jesus as a teacher of God's way who could and would gather around him a group of students (disciples) that would seek to soak up all his wisdom and insight. Thus, John in writing to a Greek speaking audience who did not understand either Hebrew or Aramaic moves immediately with the parenthetical insertion "[which is called Teacher \(Διδάσκαλε\) when translated into Greek.](#)" Then his Greek speaking audience can understand the basic idea of the noun of

direct address.

Their request is to know where Jesus was staying: ποῦ μένεις; They had seen him the day before, and evidently assumed that he had some sort of place to spend the nights nearby. Many commentators think that behind this question is a desire for a private conversation with Jesus in order to learn more about him. Although such could well be the case, nothing in the text overtly asserts this. It is a deduction from reasoning that feels the disciples were



prompted by more than mere curiosity to see where Jesus was staying. As Ernst Haenchen (*Hermeneia*, Logos Systems) also reminds, nothing in the Johannine narrative suggests that large crowds of people were present with John on this occasion, unlike the Synoptic Gospel narratives. Hermeneutically it is a mistake to carry the assumption of one tradition over into another with no signal justifying it. In fact, the Johannine text points toward only John's circle of disciples being present during these events. Only the two delegations of Levites and priests (1:19-23) and those from the Pharisees (1:24-27) are mentioned beyond the circle of disciples. And the text can be read so that only one delegation came out to John from Jerusalem.

When Jesus and the two disciples arrived at where he was spending the nights, it was early enough in the afternoon for extended conversation. John makes a point of saying that they remained with him the rest of that day and that their encounter with him initially had taken place about mid-afternoon. It was the tenth division of twelve for the daylight hours, so that would put it sometime around 4:00 pm in the afternoon. Our curiosity is heightened by not being told about the conversation they had with Jesus the

rest of that afternoon. All that we can legitimately conclude is that something Jesus said to them convinced Andrew that Jesus was the Messiah, since this is what he declared to his brother Peter sometime that evening after leaving Jesus (cf. v. 41).

What lessons can we glean from these verses? The main thing that I see is the influence of John the Baptist upon these two disciples. John had sufficient spiritual insight to perceive who Jesus was, and he didn't hesitate to declare that to those of his circle of students. This, even if it meant the loss of some of those students from his circle. His message (v. 30) had emphasized his own diminishing role in comparison to Jesus' growing role. Now that began to be realized. What we should see here is ministry focused on bringing people to Jesus not to ourselves. No preacher has authority from God to build his own circle of loyalists. We must never give to any preacher or teacher the loyalty that belongs exclusively to Jesus.

Secondly, I see here a healthy curiosity by these two disciples to find out everything they could about this Jesus that John talked about. When given the opportunity, they went straight to Jesus to gain answers to their questions. The image of Jesus in the New Testament is that he always appreciates and honors straightforward questions. When they are sincerely motivated, he will respond to them in ways that help us see clearly just who he is and what his claims upon our lives are. These two disciples discovered the greatest answer possible to their question. Not only did they find out where Jesus was staying, but they discovered convincingly for themselves that this Jesus is God's promised Messiah. We can still make such a discovery today.

b. By the witness of a brother, vv. 40-42

Greek NT

40 Ἦν Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς Σίμωνος Πέτρου εἷς ἐκ τῶν δύο τῶν ἀκουσάντων παρὰ Ἰωάννου καὶ ἀκολουθησάντων αὐτῷ· 41 εὕρισκει οὗτος πρῶτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἴδιον Σίμωνα καὶ λέ-

NASB

40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). 42 He

NRSV

40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). 42 He

NLT

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who had heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother, Simon, and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (which

γει αὐτῶ· εὐρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν, ὃ ἔστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον χριστός. 42 ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν. ἐμβλέψας αὐτῶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· σὺ εἶ Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου, σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος.

Notes:

These verses constitute a second segment of the first episode, and have been understood to be the direction intended by the gospel writer for the entire episode: to get Peter on the table being renamed by Jesus. Whether such is the case is not for certain, but the episode does move from two unnamed disciples seeking Jesus to a pair of named brothers coming to the Lord in recognition of him. And more importantly for the Johannine narrative, of being recognized and acknowledged by Jesus.

The temptation is to label this unit a call narrative and understand it in the manner of the Synoptic Gospel call narratives of these two brothers as well as of James and John and of Matthew. But the Synoptic Gospel language of calling is not in this pericope. Jesus is more passive; the brothers take the initiative in coming to Jesus. Yet it is helpful to put the four narratives on the table, side by side in order to gain a clearer look into the Johannine account.

brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” R61 (which is translated Peter).

brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

means the Christ). 42 Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “You are Simon, the son of John – but you will be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

Rather quickly the distinctives surface clearly. Andrew and Simon are together at the Sea of Galilee fishing when Jesus approaches them. Luke, although using the term lake of Gennesaret for the Sea of Galilee, adds the additional detail of the crowds pressing in on Jesus pushing him to ask to use one of the brothers’ fishing boats in order to speak to the crowds. Afterwards the instructions to Peter on where to catch the fish leads to Peter being overwhelmed by this demonstration of supernatural power by Jesus. This creates the climate for Jesus to issue his call to discipleship to Peter.

But the Johannine narrative centers on the recognition of who Jesus is by Andrew and then taking the time to go round up Peter to bring him to meet this Jesus whom Andrew believes is the Messiah. When Peter meets Jesus, he undergoes a name change from Simon Peter to Cephas.

One can conclude from these narratives that

Matthew 4:18-20

18 As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Mark 1:16-18

16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him.



Luke 5:1-11

1 Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2 he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the

John 1:40-42

40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). 42 He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

the Johannine episode is earlier and takes place on the east side of the Jordan. Coming out of that encounter was an acquaintance with Jesus through an extraordinary contact with him. Later when Andrew and Peter were back home in Capernaum carrying on their business of fishing Jesus contacts them with the decisive call to abandon their business and to follow him as a disciple. Most likely out of that earlier contact they came to understand much better who this carpenter's son from Nazareth was. The extraordinary demonstration of Jesus' power in Luke's narrative further re-enforces this impression of Jesus by Andrew and Peter. Whether or not the Synoptic Gospel writers were aware of this earlier meeting of the brothers with Jesus cannot be determined, although their descriptions would suggest that they did not know about the previous meeting.

This first encounter described by John contains several distinctive Johannine tones. First, Andrew's declaration to Peter "We have found the Messiah" (εὕρηκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν) has to be translated into the appropriate Greek term. Messiah in Hebrew meant the Anointed One which was equivalent in Greek to Christ: ὁ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνεύμενον χριστός.

Interestingly, Andrew moved from Jesus as the Lamb of God in John's preaching to Jesus is the Messiah. The connection of these concepts evidently depended upon personal contact with Jesus. Thus Andrew's visit with Jesus not only confirmed the impression that he had gained from John the Baptist. It added new understanding to his perception of Jesus.

Additionally, Peter's new name is preserved in the transliterated Aramaic Cephias. This is also translated into the Greek Petros for the benefit of John's Greek readership: σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος. Both the Aramaic and the Greek terms mean the same thing: rock. Thus Simon is perceived by Jesus to become the solid rock of leadership for the Twelve apostles that the Lord will gather around himself. Of course, the stable leadership of Peter takes a while to develop as his story unfolds in the pages of the New Testament. Interestingly, after John translates [Cephas](#) into Peter for his readers here, he never uses Cephias again in reference to Simon. Paul alone will be the one to consistently call Peter Cephias in 1 Corinthians and Galatians.

nets." 6 When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." 11 When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

The spatial logistics of the Johannine narrative require assumptions that Peter was not very far away from where Andrew visited with Jesus during the afternoon hours. He had time to go find Peter and both of them had time to walk to where Jesus was staying, all on the same day. Whether or not they spent the night with Jesus is not clear. What happened to the other unnamed disciple is unclear. Perhaps he stayed with Jesus while Andrew was hunting up Peter. Probably both

these brothers were on the east side of the Jordan away from their fishing business on the northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee because of being a disciple of John the Baptist. But of this we can only be sure about regarding Andrew. The text doesn't say directly that Peter was a follower of John. But whatever the precise situation, we can know that Andrew made a profound recognition that Jesus is the anointed Messiah sent from God. Jesus saw in Peter a future leader of his group of apostles long before Peter realized what lay ahead for his life.

What insights for Christian discipleship today can be gleaned from this account? Clearly the joy of exciting spiritual discovery is to be shared. One naturally turns to loved ones first. Andrew made



the discovery that God at long last was sending the Anointed Deliverer that the prophets of the OT had promised centuries before. That news needed to be shared. Andrew did so naturally and spontaneously. And so should we. Our sharing of our faith should flow naturally and spontaneously out of our excitement about Jesus. Anything less loses credibility and persuasiveness.

We must allow Jesus to see hidden potential in our lives that we're not necessarily aware of. He saw that in Peter. He sees that in each of his disciples. Peter's challenge in subsequent years was to allow this potential to be realized through the molding and empowering presence of Christ. That is our challenge as well. Peter's life became a success story, and ours can too.



c. By the witness of a friend, vv. 43-51

Greek NT

43 Τῇ ἐπαύριον ἠθέλησεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν καὶ εὐρίσκει Φίλιππον. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀκολούθει μοι. 44 ἦν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος ἀπὸ Βηθσαϊδά, ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου. 45 εὐρίσκει Φίλιππος τὸν Ναθαναήλ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ὃν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφηταὶ εὐρήκαμεν, Ἰησοῦν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ. 46 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ· ἐκ Ναζαρέτ δύναται τι ἀγαθὸν εἶναι; λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ] φίλιππος· ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε. 47 εἶδεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Ναθαναήλ ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει περὶ αὐτοῦ· ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν. 48 λέγει αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ· πόθεν με γινώσκεις; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· πρὸ τοῦ σε Φίλιππον φωνῆσαι ὄντα ὑπὸ τὴν συκῆν εἰδόν σε. 49 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ· ῥάββι, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. 50 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὅτι εἰπόν σοι ὅτι εἰδόν σε ὑποκάτω τῆς συκῆς, πιστεύεις; μείζω τούτων ὄψη.

NASB

43 The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. 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." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to 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 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." 50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater

NRSV

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. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" 48 Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49 Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things

NASB

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, be my disciple." 44 Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. 45 Philip went off to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46 "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from there?" "Just come and see for yourself," Philip said. 47 As they approached, Jesus said, "Here comes an honest man – a true son of Israel." 48 "How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked. And Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you." 49 Nathanael replied, "Teacher, you are the Son of God – the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus asked him, "Do you believe all this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will

51 καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ἄμην ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγότα καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

things than these.” 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.”

than these.” 51 And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

see greater things than this.” 51 Then he said, “The truth is, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down upon the Son of Man.”

Notes:

The next episode takes place somewhere in Galilee. Jesus was close enough in Bethany to travel in less than one day’s time into the province of Galilee in northern Palestine. Where he comes across Philip is not mentioned apart from being in Galilee.

Because Philip is one of the lesser known apostles of Jesus the gospel writer takes pains to introduce him to the readers with greater detail than with Andrew and Peter. Philip basically only shows up inside the fourth gospel, in chapters 1, 6, 12 and 14. His name appears linked to Bartholomew in Mt. 10:3 and Mk. 3:18. But this introduction doesn’t come until Jesus had issued his call to Philip to “Follow me” (ἀκολουθεῖ μοι). The present imperative form of the Greek verb issues a call to “come be following after me.” This is the decisive call that will be issued to the two sets of brothers -- Andrew and Peter; James and John -- at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry in Galilee. Philip has the distinction of being the only disciple in the fourth Gospel to whom Jesus expressly issued this call.

The connection to Andrew and Peter is made in the introduction of Philip: he comes from the same hometown, Bethsaida, as does Andrew and Peter. This was a small village located on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee outside the province of Galilee and just east of the mouth of the Jordan as it flowed into the Sea of Galilee. This is the [probable location](#) of the village, although another spot inside Galilee and close to Capernaum is possible. Some prefer this site, but archaeological investigation remains very limited.

Philip’s realization of who Jesus is gets more



detailed depiction with the words “him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth” (ὃν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφῆται εὐρήκαμεν, Ἰησοῦν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ). This asserts that the promised Messiah is Jesus. It is the mentioning of Nazareth that prompts his friend Nathanael’s skeptical response to this news.

Nathanael evidently -- according to Jhn. 21:2 -- came the village of Cana in central Galilee. It may very well be intentional that the next episode after this encounter with Nathanael takes place in Cana (John 2:1-11). Someway he and Philip had become friends, so Philip naturally turns to him with the excited news of finding the Messiah. But Nathanael grew up less than ten miles north of Nazareth and had a negative opinion about the little village to the south. “Nothing good ever comes out of Nazareth,” declares Nathanael.

Philip’s response was the same as Jesus’ to the two unnamed disciples earlier: “Come and see.” When Nathanael meets Jesus, a dialogue follows. Jesus declares Nathanael to be a person without deceit, that is, a man of integrity. Nathanael wants to know how Jesus knows this. Jesus indicates that he saw Nathanael sitting under a fig tree before Philip called him to come check out Jesus. Nathanael recognizes supernatural powers at work in this and acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God and King of Israel. Jesus promises him that he will witness greater things than this in the days to come, namely the angels of God coming down out of Heaven to take care of the Son of Man and then returning back to Heaven. Although the OT vision of Jacob’s ladder (Gen. 28:12) is in the background here, the picture is one of continual care of the Son by the Heavenly Father during his time on the earth.

What can we learn from this? Friends bring friends to Jesus! When Philip experienced Jesus as Messiah he naturally turned to his friend Nathanael to introduce him to Jesus. So should we. Even friends with doubts.

Greek NT

35 Τῆ ἑπαύριον πάλιν εἰστίκει ὁ Ἰωάννης καὶ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ δύο 36 καὶ ἐμβλέψας τῷ Ἰησοῦ περιπατοῦντι λέγει ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. 37 καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ δύο μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος καὶ ἠκολούθησαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ. 38 στραφεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ θεασάμενος αὐτοὺς ἀκολουθοῦντας λέγει αὐτοῖς τί ζητεῖτε; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ ῥαββί, ὃ λέγεται μεθερμηνεούμενον διδάσκαλε, ποῦ μένεις; 39 λέγει αὐτοῖς ἔρχεσθε καὶ ὄψεσθε. ἦλθαν οὖν καὶ εἶδαν ποῦ μένει καὶ παρ' αὐτῷ ἔμειναν τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην ὥρα ἦν ὡς δεκάτη. 40 Ἦν Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς Σίμωνος Πέτρου εἷς ἐκ τῶν δύο τῶν ἀκουσάντων παρὰ Ἰωάννου καὶ ἀκολουθησάντων αὐτῷ. 41 εὕρισκει οὗτος πρῶτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἴδιον Σίμωνα καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ εὕρηκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνεούμενον χριστός. 42 ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν. ἐμβλέψας αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· σὺ εἶ Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου, σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος. 43 Τῆ ἑπαύριον ἠθέλησεν ἐξελεῖν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν καὶ εὕρισκει

NASB

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated 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. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). 43 The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of

NRSV

35 The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). 42 He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). 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. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found

NLT

35 The following day, John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36 As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and then declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" 37 Then John's two disciples turned and followed Jesus. 38 Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place, and they stayed there the rest of the day. 40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who had heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother, Simon, and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means the Christ). 42 Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "You are Simon, the son of John – but you will be called Cephas" (which means Peter). 43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, be my disciple." 44 Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. 45 Philip went off

Φίλιππον. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀκολούθει μοι. 44 ἦν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος ἀπὸ Βηθσαϊδά, ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου. 45 εὐρίσκει Φίλιππος τὸν Ναθαναήλ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὃν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφηταὶ εὐρήκαμεν, Ἰησοῦν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ. 46 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ· ἐκ Ναζαρέτ δύναται τι ἀγαθὸν εἶναι; λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ] Φίλιππος· ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε. 47 εἶδεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Ναθαναήλ ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει περὶ αὐτοῦ· ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν. 48 λέγει αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ· πόθεν με γινώσκεις; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· πρὸ τοῦ σε Φίλιππον φωνῆσαι ὄντα ὑπὸ τὴν συκῆν εἰδόν σε. 49 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ· ῥαββί, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. 50 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὅτι εἰπόν σοι ὅτι εἶδόν σε ὑποκάτω τῆς συκῆς, πιστεύεις; μείζω τούτων ὄψη. 51 καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγῆτα καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote --Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” 46 Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to 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 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.” 50 Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you that 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 the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” 46 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” 48 Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” 49 Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” 50 Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” 51 And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.” 46 “Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “Can anything good come from there?” “Just come and see for yourself,” Philip said. 47 As they approached, Jesus said, “Here comes an honest man – a true son of Israel.” 48 “How do you know about me?” Nathanael asked. And Jesus replied, “I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you.” 49 Nathanael replied, “Teacher, you are the Son of God – the King of Israel!” 50 Jesus asked him, “Do you believe all this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.” 51 Then he said, “The truth is, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down upon the Son of Man.”

Greek NT Diagram

35 Τῇ ἐπαύριον
1 πάλιν
εἰστήκει ὁ Ἰωάννης
καὶ
2 ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν
----- δύο,
36 καὶ
3 ἐμβλέψας τῷ Ἰησοῦ περιπατοῦντι
λέγει,
α "Ἴδε
ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.
37 καὶ
4 ἤκουσαν οἱ δύο μαθηταὶ
αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος
καὶ
5 ἠκολούθησαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ.
38 δὲ
6 στραφεῖς
καὶ
θεασάμενος αὐτοὺς ἀκολουθοῦντας
ὁ Ἰησοῦς ... λέγει αὐτοῖς,
β Τί ζητεῖτε;
7 δὲ
οἱ εἶπαν αὐτῷ,
γ Ῥαββί
(ὃ λέγεται μεθερμηνευόμενον Διδάσκαλε)
ποῦ μένεις;
8 39 λέγει αὐτοῖς,
δ Ἔρχεσθε
καὶ
ε ὄψεσθε.
9 οὖν
ἦλθαν
καὶ
10 εἶδαν
ποῦ μένει,
καὶ
11 παρ' αὐτῷ
ἔμειναν
τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην.
12 ὥρα ἦν
ὡς κεκάτη.

13 ⁴⁰ Ἄν' Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς Σίμωνος Πέτρου
εἷς ἐκ τῶν δύο
τῶν ἀκουσάντων
παρὰ Ἰωάννου
καὶ
ἀκολουθησάντων αὐτῷ·

14 ⁴¹ εὐρίσκει οὗτος πρῶτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν
τὸν ἴδιον Σίμωνα

15 καὶ
λέγει αὐτῷ,
ζ **Εὐρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν**
(ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον Χριστός)·

16 ⁴² ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν
πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

17 ἐμβλέψας αὐτῷ
ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν,
ι **Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου·**
θ **σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς**
(ὅ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος).

18 ⁴³ Τῇ ἐπαύριον
ἠθέλησεν ἐξελθεῖν
εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν,
καὶ

19 εὐρίσκει Φίλιππον.

20 καὶ
λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
η **Ἀκολούθει μοι.**

21 ⁴⁴ δὲ
ἦν ὁ Φίλιππος
ἀπὸ Βηθσαϊδά,
ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου.

22 ⁴⁵ εὐρίσκει Φίλιππος τὸν Ναθαναὴλ
καὶ

23 λέγει αὐτῷ,
κ **Ὅν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς**
ἐν τῷ νόμῳ
καὶ
οἱ προφῆται
εὐρήκαμεν,
Ἰησοῦν
υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ
τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ.

46
24 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ,
Ἐκ Ναζαρέτ
δύναταί τι ἀγαθὸν εἶναι·

25 λέγει ὁ Φίλιππος,
λ Ἔρχου
καὶ
μ ἴδε.

26 47 εἶδεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Ναθαναήλ
ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν

27 καὶ λέγει
περὶ αὐτοῦ,
ν Ἴδε
ἀληθῶς
Ἰσραηλῆτης
ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν.

28 48 λέγει αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ,
ξ Πόθεν με γινώσκεις;

29 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς
καὶ
30 εἶπεν αὐτῷ,
ο Πρὸ τοῦ σε Φίλιππον φωνῆσαι
ὄντα
ὑπὸ τὴν συκὴν
εἰδόν σε.

31 49 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ,
π Ῥαββί,
ρ σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,
σὺ – τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.

32 50 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς
καὶ
33 εἶπεν αὐτῷ,
σ Ὅτι εἶπον σοι
ὅτι εἰδόν σε
ὑποκάτω τῆς συκῆς
πιστεύεις;
τ μείζω τούτων ὄψη.

καὶ
λέγει αὐτῷ,

Ἄμην ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν,
ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν

ἀνεωγῶτα

καὶ

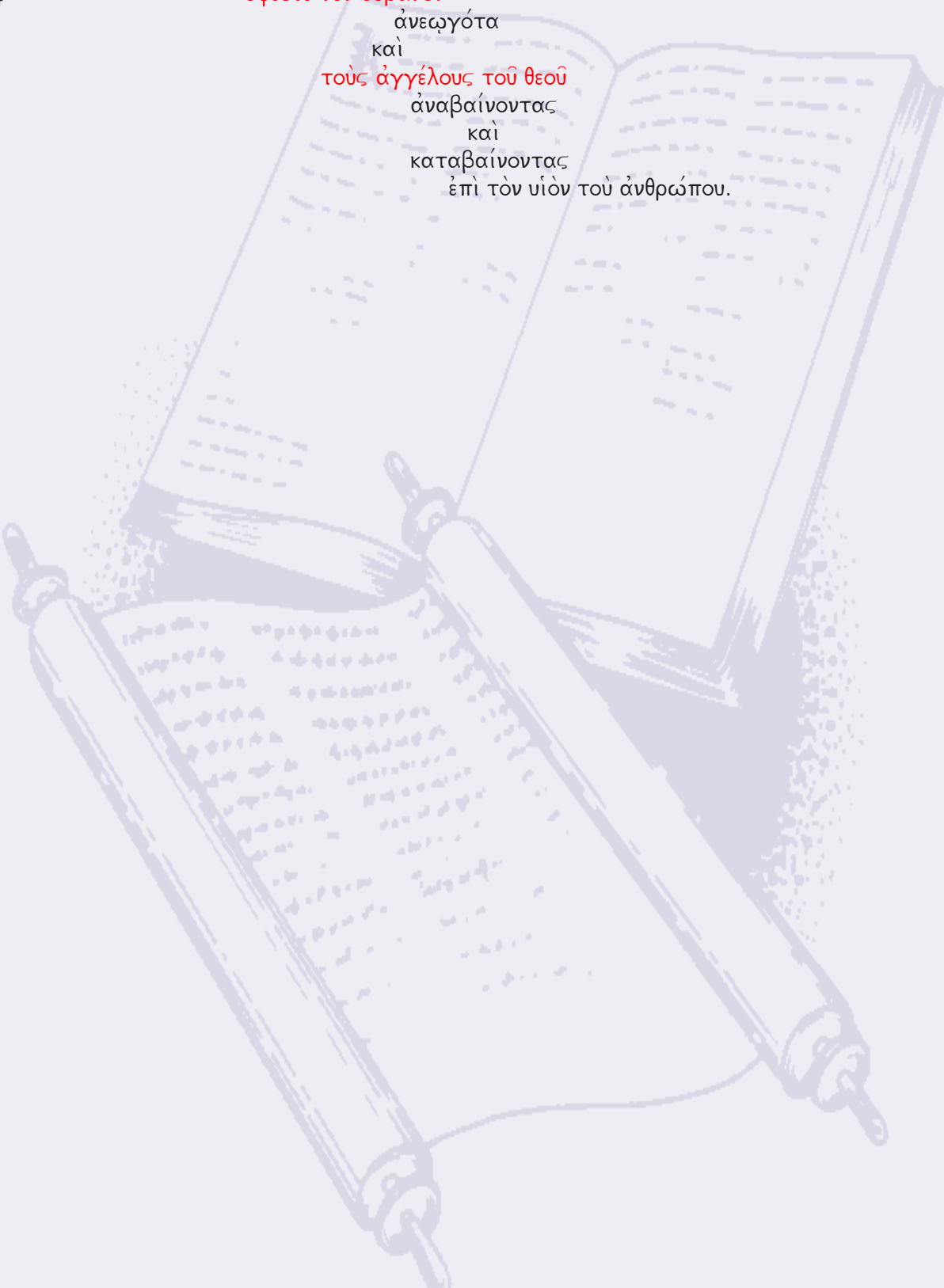
τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ

ἀναβαίνοντας

καὶ

καταβαίνοντας

ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.



Summary of Rhetorical Structure

The clearest signal of a two-fold division of 1:35-51 comes in the repetition of the temporal designation $\tau\eta\ \epsilon\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\omicron\nu$, “on the next day,” from v. 35 in verse 43. This stands in a continuum of three instances of this designation in v. 29, 35, and 43, and thus linking these three events together as a close sequence of episodes. The introduction of John in the narrative begins with 1:19-28. John’s ministry is located “in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing” (v. 28). The role of John the Baptist in each of these narratives is foundational. It is he who introduces Peter and Andrew to Jesus and they are business associates / acquaintances of Philip and Nathanael, all having grown up in Bethsaida together.

The first of our narratives, vv. 35-42, revolves around Peter and Andrew becoming disciples of Jesus. The narrative begins with these two unnamed disciples of John listening to what John was saying about Jesus (statements 1-3 in vv. 35-36). Upon hearing John’s declaration that Jesus was the Lamb of God as John saw Jesus walking, they began walking toward Jesus (statements 4-5 in v. 37). A dialogue between Jesus and them takes place and was centered on the question of where Jesus was staying (statements 6-8 in vv. 38-39a). With Jesus’ challenge for them to come and see where he was staying, they followed him to the undisclosed residence and stayed with him the remainder of that day (statements 9-12 in v. 39b).

The focus of the narrative shifts in v. 40 at statement 13 with Andrew being identified as one of these two previously unnamed disciples of John. The identity of the other disciples of John is not given in the text. With Andrew identified the emphasis moves to Andrew locating his brother Peter and making the announcement to Peter that he has found the promised Messiah (statements 14-15 in verse 41). Peter’s interest is such that he follows Andrew to where Jesus is and upon encountering Jesus the Lord declares that Peter, John’s son, will in the future be called Cephas, the Aramaic name that means Peter in Greek. No response by Peter is given, and the narrative climaxes on Jesus’ declaration about Peter.

The second of our narratives, vv. 43-51, centers on Philip and Nathanael becoming disciples of Jesus. The following day Jesus travels to Galilee where he finds Philip (statements 18-19 in verse 43). Jesus challenges Philip to “Follow me” (statement 20 in v. 43c). Philip is identified as having come from Bethsaida, the same hometown as for Andrew and Peter (statement 21 in verse 45). Philip then moves, in parallel fashion to Andrew earlier, to find his friend Nathanael to announce to him essentially the same news, although it is worded more detailedly (statements 23-23 in verse 45). Unlike Peter, Nathanael is skeptical and responds with a question about whether anything good could come from Nazareth (statement 24 in v. 46a). Philip’s reply is parallel to Jesus’ earlier challenge to the two unnamed disciples (# 8), “Come and see” (statement 24 in v. 46b).

When the two friends approach Jesus, he makes a declaration about Nathanael’s character being above reproach (statements 26-27). This initiates a dialogue between Nathanael and Jesus in which Nathanael eventually confesses Jesus as the Son of God (# 31). But the narrative climaxes with Jesus’ declaration that Nathanael will see greater things than he witness in this initial encounter (statements 32-34 in vv. 50-51).