



SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY



LESSON 2 / WEEK OF JANUARY 14, 2007

Key Scriptures: John 1:29-51, John 17:1-8

Memory Verse: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." John 17:3

COMMENTARY / This portion of the lesson is for the leader's personal study.

Review

In last week's lesson we biblically defined the word *disciple* and saw how the lasting fruit (John 15:16) of being a disciple is born by multiplying ourselves in the lives of others. This is what disciple-making is—the simple and life-long process of following Christ, becoming more like Him, and leading others to do the same. This week we are going to begin to see how being a disciple-maker can begin in our lives.

"Are", Not "Do"

There is no set process or program to "do" disciple-making. It just becomes *who we are*—and it is relational, so it looks different in every disciple's life. However, it does require intentionality on the part of every believer. It is the natural fruit of the true disciple's life, but like fruit, it must be nurtured in order to grow. Every disciple-maker makes a choice to intentionally invest himself in the lives of others.

Jesus' Prayer for His Disciples

The accompanying message in worship this week will center on John 17:1-8. John 17 is Jesus' prayer to the Father on behalf of His disciples. In this chapter, we see Jesus' love and concern for His disciples. He wants His work on earth to continue through them. In verses 1-8, Jesus is telling God that He has no doubt that His disciples believe He is the Messiah and that God sent Him. In verse 3, Jesus describes eternal life as knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, the One God sent. It is interesting to note that in verse 4,





Jesus says He has completed the work God gave Him to do. Yet this prayer was prayed before Jesus died on the cross. What work is He referring to?

Verse 6 answers that question. Jesus says He has revealed God to those God gave Him out of the world. “Those God gave Him” are His twelve disciples. Jesus goes on to say in verses 7 and 8 that He gave His disciples the words that God gave Him and that they accepted these words. The disciples know that God sent Jesus to earth to die on the cross to save us from our sins. Isn’t it interesting that according to Jesus’ own words in these verses, He also came to earth to reveal God to these men by making them His disciples?

Believing Jesus Is Who He Says He Is

Jesus shows us in the first 8 verses of this prayer the foundation of being His disciple. At its core, being a disciple is believing that Jesus is who He says He is. We saw this truth last week in our study of Matthew 4:18-22 when Jesus called the first four disciples. Would they have left everything to follow Him if they didn’t believe He was who He said He was? Obviously, their belief grew over the next three years as they spent time with Jesus and came to know Him more intimately and personally. But there was *initial faith in the person of Christ*. That is at the core of all who follow Christ. This is why Ephesians 2:8-9 says that we are saved by grace, through faith, not by works. Our “works” do not bring us salvation. Faith does, by God’s grace. The Christ-like character and deeds come later.

Diving In

Today, we are going to dive into how this foundation of being a disciple (belief that Jesus is who He says He is) relates to disciple-making. The lesson will not rest in John 17:1-8 but instead journey to different passages of Scripture that illustrate the intentionality of disciple-making and the truth communicated in John 17:1-8.

Looking Again at The Disciples’ Call

Our lesson this week will focus on the Gospel of John’s account of the same event we studied last week in Matthew 4:18-22. John describes the event differently than Matthew does. We need to understand that the two accounts do not contradict one another. The writers are two different people with separate personalities, so their attention to detail is different. All Scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16) and thus cannot contradict itself. This passage clearly illustrates the foundation of being a disciple (belief that Jesus is who He says He is) and how this belief compels us to begin the first step in disciple-making, which is *telling others what we believe about Christ*. In other words, we are to *share* the Word.

For our lesson, we will break John 1:29-51, the key passage, into three parts. This will make it simpler to handle during your discussion time with your group.

Part 1: John 1:29-34

In this passage, we see how intentionality is at the heart of making disciples. The foundation of being a disciple is having faith in Christ. And this faith compels the disciple to tell others about Christ, which is the first component of disciple-making—sharing the Word. The passage begins with John the Baptist proclaiming who Christ is to those around him. In verse 29, John the Baptist describes Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” In verse 30, he goes on to tell the people that Jesus is the One he has been preaching to them about, the One who would come after him and baptize

not with water, as John does, but with the Holy Spirit. In verses 32-34, John testifies that he himself believes Jesus is the Son of God.

In this passage we see that God has revealed to John who Jesus is—the Son of God—and that John has believed this truth about Christ. The result is that John the Baptist intentionally shares with others what God has shown him about Jesus.

The foundation of being a disciple is having faith in Christ.

Part 2: John 1:35-42

Now look what happens in verses 35-36: The next day, Jesus comes by again, and John again intentionally shares with two of his disciples who Jesus is—the Lamb of God. Then in verses 37-39 these two men follow Jesus and spend the day with Him. In verse 38 they address Jesus as “Rabbi,” which means “teacher.” Verse 40 tells us that one of these two men is Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.

How Did They Know?

Notice in verse 40 that these men followed Jesus after they heard what John the Baptist said about Him. So after John believed he told others, which resulted in at least two men believing and following Christ. Then look what happens in verse 41. The “first thing” Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him they had found “the Messiah.” Remember that in verse 38 Andrew addressed Jesus as “Rabbi.” But now he testifies to his brother that Jesus is the Messiah. Do you see how his faith resulted in his telling his brother about Christ?

These verses don’t tell us that Jesus performed any miracles that day. They just spent the day with Christ and they knew He was the Messiah. John the Baptist had told them He was the “Lamb of God.” Andrew made the choice to follow Him and spend the day with Him. Then he went and found his brother and brought Simon to Jesus in verse 42. Here, Jesus changes Simon’s name to Peter. Andrew was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. This faith compelled him to find his brother and introduce him to Christ, also.

Andrew Tells Those Close To Him

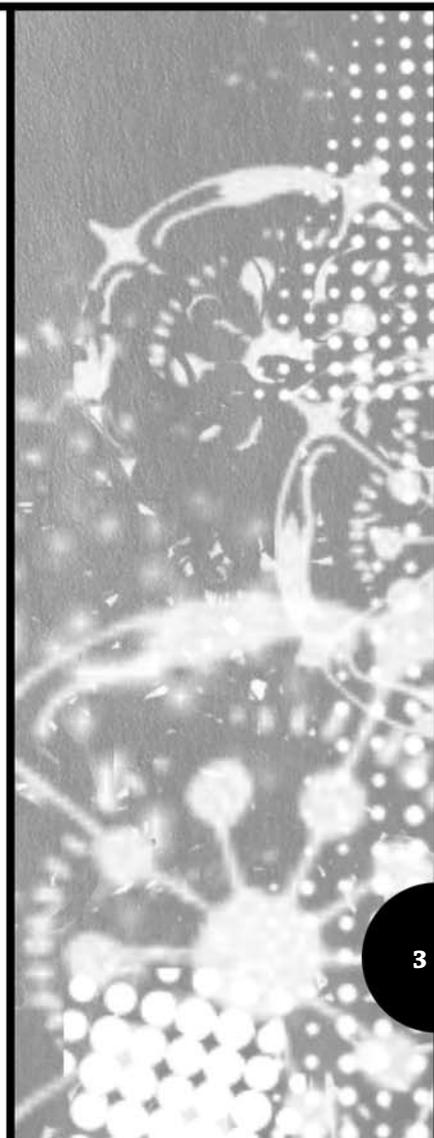
It never occurred to Andrew to keep the truth about who Jesus was to himself. The first thing he did was to tell his brother. Notice, too, that in telling others he did not go out and start preaching to strangers in the street. He went and found one closest to himself—his brother—and told him. There probably would come a time when he would preach to strangers as Christ’s disciple, but the natural first step of following Christ was to go find someone he knew who didn’t know who Jesus was and bring him along.

Believing in Christ, making the choice to follow Him, and then leading others to do the same by telling them who Christ is.

Part 3: John 1:43-51

In this passage we see the same thing happen in another life. In verse 43 Jesus calls Philip to follow Him. Then in verse 45, Philip goes and finds Nathanael and tells him (verse 45) that he has found the One Moses prophesied about in the Law. In verse 46, Nathanael questions the truth that Jesus is who Moses wrote about.

Observe Philip’s response to him. He doesn’t argue or try to persuade him. He simply says, “Come and see.” Here again, we see the intentionality of a disciple





leading others to follow Christ by showing them who He is. In verses 47-48 Jesus stuns Nathanael by telling him where he was before Philip ever called him. In verse 49 Nathanael calls Jesus “Rabbi” and confesses that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.

The first component of disciple-making is sharing the Word.

The Common Thread

In all three of these passages we see a common thread. Each person (John the Baptist, Andrew, and Philip) began by believing in the person of Christ. They believed that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. The result of that belief was an intentional choice to *share this truth* with others they knew. And none of these men had any idea how far-reaching their decision to tell others would be.

Far Reaching Results

Let’s examine just some of the implications of this passage starting with John the Baptist. We see him tell two of his disciples who Jesus is in John 1:35. One of these disciples is Andrew and we see him tell his brother, Simon Peter, who Jesus is in John 1:41. There is no way Andrew could have foreseen what would come out of his sharing Christ with his brother.

Now let’s move to Matthew 16:13-18. This passage takes place after Jesus has already called all twelve of His disciples. In this passage Jesus is asking the disciples who people say that He is. The disciples tell Him that some say He is John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or another prophet. In verse 15 Jesus asks Peter (Andrew’s brother) directly who he thinks Jesus is. Peter responds in verse 16 by confessing that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Then Jesus responds to Peter in verses 17-18 by telling him that He will build His church on Peter and his confession.

Now, look at Acts 2:14. This takes place at Pentecost after the Holy Spirit came down on the twelve apostles. In this verse, we see Peter stand up and address the crowd. Acts 2:15-40 contains his sermon in which he tells the crowd who Jesus is (remember his confession to Jesus in Matthew 16:16) and begs them to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ. What was the result? Acts 2:41 tells us that 3,000 people accepted his message and were baptized—3,000 people!

Do you see the simplicity and effectiveness of disciple-making? John the Baptist, Andrew, and even Simon Peter could never have known the lasting fruit that would come from their obedience to be intentional about telling others who Christ is. And this does not even include the fruit that came as a result of Philip telling Nathanael...

Don’t Wait to Share Christ

Can you imagine what would happen today if we became intentional about sharing with others *who Christ is*? Notice that John the Baptist, Andrew and Philip did not have the job of convincing others to follow Christ. They simply proclaimed who Jesus is and brought others to Him. Jesus is the One who saves. In each of these men’s lives it began with their own confession of faith in the person of Christ. Then it was an intentional choice to tell others.

They didn’t wait until they knew more or had it all figured out. We will never make disciples if we wait until we arrive at some abstract level of maturity because the more you know about Christ, the more you realize how much more there is to know. We will never arrive at a point in our relationship with Him where we are “ready” to lead others. *Following Christ and leading others to follow Him are not exclusive. They are simultaneous.*

Seeing Jesus Today

We cannot literally take people to Christ the human like John the Baptist, Andrew and Philip did since He no longer walks the earth. Or does He? If He lives in us through the Holy Spirit, doesn't He still walk the earth? He walks in us and through us. That is why, as we studied last week, abiding in (or remaining in or with) Him is the only way to bear lasting fruit through making disciples. We cannot do it; only He can. Just as John the Baptist, Andrew and Philip brought people to Christ to see who He was, that is what we must do. Only now, it is our lives that must say "come and see," as Philip said to Nathanael.

Getting Practical

So how do we practically apply this truth to our lives? In John 4:34-36 Jesus told His disciples to open their eyes and look at the fields because they are ripe for harvest. What fields was He talking about? The fields are the nations and Jesus was stressing to His disciples the importance of sharing the gospel with the world around them.

You've heard the term "making disciples of all nations" before (Matthew 28:19-20). So how do we make disciples of all nations? That seems so big, so idealistic and unattainable. How can I, one person, reach the nations?

We will do it the same way John the Baptist, Andrew, Philip and Peter did. By intentionally finding people in our lives who don't know Christ and telling them who He is. This is where disciple-making will start in our lives. It won't end there—it certainly didn't in John the Baptist's, Andrew's, Philip's or Peter's lives. But what we need now is a beginning. Christ will be faithful to show us the rest. The question is have we believed in Him? If so, have we opened our eyes and looked at the fields? They are ripe for the harvest of eternal life.

The Workers

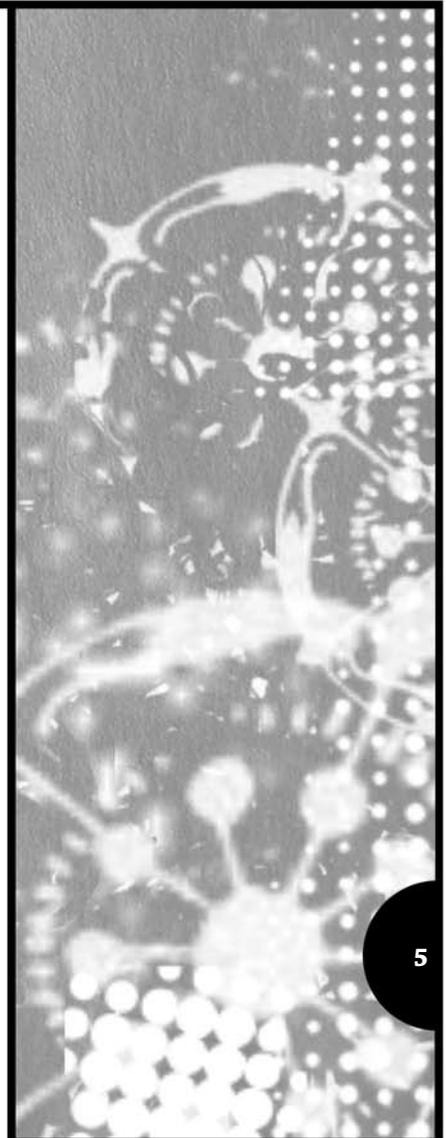
Matthew 9:37-38 says the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Jesus goes on to tell His disciples in this passage to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the field. We are the few workers. And we must ask the Lord to send more workers.

But think about it—how is He going to send more workers? Will He just drop them out of heaven? No, of course not. It is still His plan to use us to lead others to Christ. And as we give ourselves to disciple-making, He will use us to multiply the workers in the harvest field. He will send more workers through us, not to us! When we are intentional about multiplying our lives into others, the fruit of our lives will be an ever-increasing army of workers in the harvest field. And the Lord of the harvest will work through us as we penetrate the nations sharing His Word. And the inevitable result? He alone will get the glory!

TEACHING / This portion of the lesson is for the entire class.

Introduction / 5 minutes

Begin your time together by doing the following activity to illustrate the effectiveness of disciple-making. First, ask for two students from the group who are willing to help with the activity. You will need to discuss this activity with them before your group meets. Have them come up to the front of the room with you.





Instruct the first student to go and get five people (adjust the number based on your class size) to come stand with him/her at the front of the room. The student should pick five people and ask them all at once to come up and stand with him/her. Next, instruct the other student to get five people up to the front of the room, but he/she can only tell one other person, and that person can only tell one other person, etc. This will illustrate multiplication. After the second student has five others, have them sit down and ask the group the following questions.

- How many people did the first person tell to come to the front of the room?
- How many people did the second person tell to come to the front of the room?
- Did the fact that the first student told more people initially result in him/her reaching more people?
- In fact, which student would have had more people standing with them if the activity had continued past five people?
- Now, if I told you to go out and reach five people for Christ this year, how many of you think you could do it?
- How many of us would not even try because in our mind that means we would have to tell five different people about Christ and them believe?
- In this context, which example we saw is more effective for leading others to Christ, telling five people at one time or just telling one person and training them to lead one person, etc.?

Share with your group that today we will continue our study of disciple-making. And much like the activity we just saw, we will see in Scripture how telling one person about Christ can lead to many more believing in Him. Impress on the group the word *share*. Sharing the Word is the first step in biblical disciple-making.

Review / 5 minutes

Before you begin today's study, briefly review the main points of last week's lesson. Review the following:

- What is a disciple of Christ?
- What does it mean to follow Christ?
- How did Jesus call the four disciples in Matthew 4:18-22?
- What is a "fisher of men?"
- What is disciple-making?
- What is the only lasting fruit of a true disciple's life?

Key Study / 35 minutes

Have students open their Bibles to John 1:29-51. As you begin the study time in God's Word, pray that God would make the entire class receptive to what He wants to reveal to the group today as you discuss His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the class into all truth (John 16:13) so that He will be glorified through the discussion. Pray that each person's life will be changed as a result of the truths you learn today (James 1:22).

Using the commentary, explain to the group that the core of being a disciple of Christ is *believing that Jesus is who He says He is*. Refer back to last week's lesson in Matthew 4:18-22 to illustrate this point. Those four men left everything to follow Christ because they believed in Him.

Observation / What does the Scripture say?

Explain to the group that this week you are going to split them into three groups to examine the key passage. Before you split them up, read (or have a

student read) John 1:29-51 aloud to the whole group. Using the commentary, explain to the group that this passage is the Gospel of John's account of the same passage we studied last week. Instruct them that the versions focus on different details of the same event and do not contradict each other. Then, give each student the handout and assign each group one set of questions.

Instruct them to answer the questions that correspond to their assigned passage. Give them about 5-10 minutes in their groups and then bring them back together. Lead a discussion through the questions using the lesson commentary and allowing each group to share what they learned from their assigned passage.

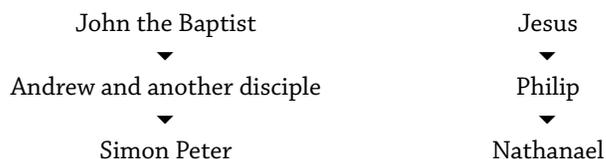
Note to facilitators: Student worksheets for this portion of the teaching are included at the end of this lesson. These three groups can be as many as 10-15 people or even just one person, depending on the overall size of your Small Group.

Interpretation / What does the Scripture mean?

As you have each group share their answers, lead the group in a discussion of the implications of each passage using the following questions (along with the questions on the student worksheet). Make sure to stress intentionality of disciple-making and how we see it in each of these passages.

- How is faith the foundation of each of these men telling others about Christ?
- How do we see their intentionality to tell others?
- Who are they telling? Is it strangers or people they already know?
- How quickly did they tell others? Did they wait until they understood everything about Christ?

Using the commentary, explain to the group that we are now going to examine some of the implications of what we see in this passage. Using a white board or poster board, illustrate the progression of those coming to Christ on the board. Your illustration may look something like this:



Explain that each man (with the exception of John the Baptist) went and told just *one other person* about who they believed Jesus to be. Explain that none of these men (except Jesus) could have possibly known how far-reaching their decision to tell others about Christ would be.

Have your students turn in their Bibles to Matthew 16:13-18. Have a student read the verses aloud to the group. Using the commentary, explain the context of these verses and lead the group in a discussion using the following questions:

- In verse 16, what is Simon Peter's confession?
- How does Jesus respond to this confession? What does He say in verse 18?
- As a reminder, who was it that first told Peter about Jesus according to John 1?
- Do you think Andrew knew Christ would build His church on Peter's confession?

Now, lead your group to see how Christ brought this to pass in Peter's life. Have them turn in their bibles to Acts 2:14 and read the verse aloud. Using the commentary, explain to the group that this is Peter's sermon at Pentecost.





Have a student read Acts 2:41 aloud and then ask the following questions.

- How many people were saved as a result of Peter's sermon?
- Who all do we know from our study today had a part in these 3,000 people coming to faith in Christ?
- Just based on what we've seen in Scripture today, how many people came to faith in Christ as a result of John the Baptist sharing His faith in Christ with just two men?
- John the Baptist was dead by the time Pentecost occurred. Do you think he ever could have imagined the lasting fruit of his ministry?

Application / How will this Truth change me?

Using the commentary, review with your group that each of these men became disciple-makers by intentionally telling others who they had become convinced Christ was. Remind them that they didn't wait to do it until they arrived at some level of maturity—it was *immediate*. Point out that our mission as disciples is to take people to the person of Christ by telling them who we know Him to be. Stress that our lives are how He lives today on earth. *He lives in and through us.*

Have the group turn in their Bibles to John 4:34-36. Read the verses aloud and ask the following questions.

- What does Jesus instruct His disciples to do in verse 35?
- What is Jesus referring to when He says the "fields are ripe for harvest?" What harvest?
- Are the fields still ripe today?
- How do we as believers today close our eyes to the fields?
- What are some ways that we can open our eyes?

Now have your group turn in their bibles to Matthew 9:37-38 and read it aloud. Ask the following questions.

- How does Jesus describe the harvest and its workers in these verses?
- What are we instructed to do about this problem in verse 38?

Using the commentary, lead your group in a discussion about how God provides workers for the harvest. They will come through us, His church, as we multiply ourselves in the lives of others. First, we must decide if we really believe He is who He says He is. We must open our eyes and look at the fields. Then comes the choice: Will we tell others? *Will we share the Word?*

Close your time together by spending a few moments allowing each student to think about his/her own life. If they haven't placed their faith in Christ, invite them to do so now or come and talk to you after you are finished or at another time. Have those who have believed pray silently that God would bring to their mind just one person they know who doesn't believe in Christ. Have them pray for this person, and encourage them to be intentional this week to share Christ with them. End your time by praying with the group.

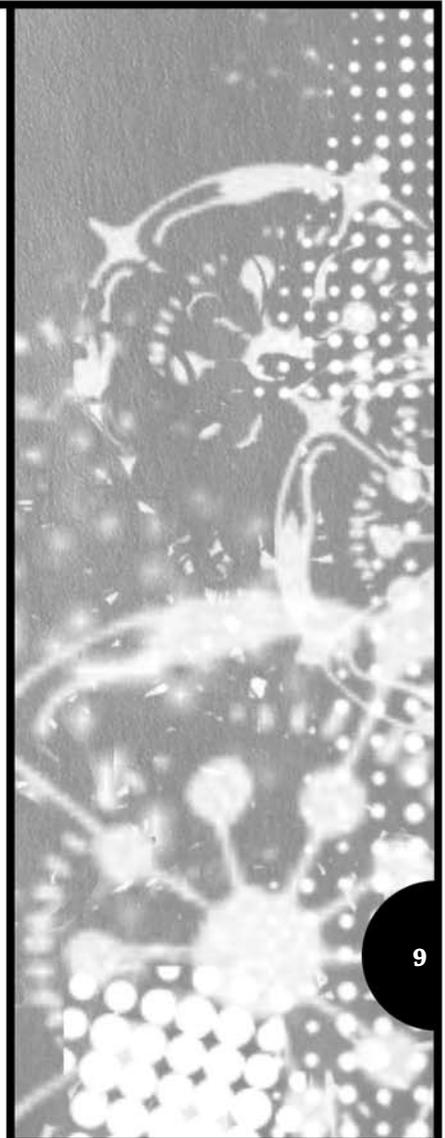
MESSAGE MERGE / Putting the sermon and the Small Group study together.

Lead-in Questions / If your class meets *before* worship and the message

- What have you learned today that is new to you?
- What have you learned today that you can pass on to others?
- How can you apply what you have learned tomorrow at home/work/school?
- How does today's lesson expand on what you learned last week?
- What will you be listening for today during the message?
- How can your classmates pray for you as you go into worship?

Post-teaching Questions / If your class meets *after* worship and the message

- How can you apply what you have learned tomorrow at home/work/school?
- What portion of the message was most impacting for you?
- Were any areas of the message unclear or confusing? Which and why?
- What have you learned today that you can pass on to others?
- What Scripture is the most important for you today?
- What did you learn in Small Group that added to what you heard during the worship message?





STUDENT ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

Group 1

John 1:29-34

- How does John the Baptist describe Jesus in verse 29?
- In verse 31, what does John say is the reason he came baptizing with water?
- What testimony does John give in verses 32-33?
- Who does John say Jesus is in verse 34?

Group 2

John 1:35-42

- Who is with John the Baptist according to verse 35 and who does he tell them Jesus is in verse 36?
- What was the result of John's confession in verse 37? What did they do?
- Describe the events in verses 38-39.
- What was the first thing Andrew did after following Jesus according to verse 41?
- How does Andrew describe Jesus to Simon in verse 41? How does this differ from what Andrew called Jesus in verse 38?

Group 3

John 1:43-51

- What does Jesus say to Philip in verse 43?
- What does Philip do according to verse 45?
- How does Philip describe Jesus to Nathanael in verse 45?
- How does Nathanael respond according to verse 46? Does he believe immediately?
- What is Philip's response to Nathanael's question?
- Describe Nathanael's encounter with Jesus in verses 47-51.