

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XX. God's Validating Transfer Of John's Disciples To Jesus
(John 1:35-51)

I. Introduction

- A. When Messiah's Forerunner in John the Baptist began his public ministry, he attracted people all around Jerusalem, all Judaea and all the region around the Jordan River, Matthew 3:5. In fact, though Israel's leaders rejected him, all the people around Jerusalem believed that John was a prophet from God, Matthew 21:26.
- B. Accordingly, if Jesus is the Messiah Whom John as His Forerunner was to introduce, there should be evidence of God's switching followers of the highly respected John over to Jesus from among the common people.
- C. John 1:35-51 provides that evidence and illustrates the work of God in the hearts of His people who believe in the Lord to grow in their faith in Christ. We view the passage for our insight and application (as follows):

II. God's Validating Transfer Of John's Disciples To Jesus, John 1:35-51.

- A. In John 1:35-39, God worked in the hearts of two of John's disciples to switch them over to follow Jesus:
 - 1. One day as John was standing with two of his followers, he looked upon Jesus as He walked and said that He was the Lamb of God, and John's two followers immediately started to follow Jesus, John 1:35-37.
 - 2. Jesus turned to see them following Him and asked, "What do you want?" (John 1:38a NIV), and they addressed Him as Rabbi, John 1:38b. That was a title "of highest respect given by the Jews to those who were prepared to interpret the law to them," and "in Genesis 49:10 it can be concluded that Messiah, when He would come, would be able to interpret the law to the nations so they could understand what God expects of His covenant people . . . (Thus) (t)he two former disciples of John desired to put themselves under the Messiah's teaching ministry." (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 111) God was clearly at work to lead these two men to trust in Christ.
 - 3. The two men asked Jesus where He was staying (John 1:38c), implying "more than that they wanted to be show hospitality for a short time" (Ibid.), and Jesus' answer was, "Come . . . and you will see," v. 39 NIV. This answer implied that they could immediately accompany Jesus, John 1:39b; Ibid.
- B. One of these two disciples was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, and the other unnamed disciple was likely John who repeatedly humbly omitted his identity in this gospel, John 1:40. Andrew was the first follower of Jesus to practice outreach, for he introduced his brother Peter to Jesus, John 1:41-42:
 - 1. Andrew found his brother Simon and informed him that he and the other unnamed disciple of Jesus had found the Messiah, and he brought his interested brother Simon to Jesus, John 1:41-42a.
 - 2. When Jesus saw Simon, He renamed him "Cephas" in their native Aramaic tongue, which means a stone, John 1:42b. Thus, in renaming Simon as a "stone," Jesus signified His sovereignty over Peter (cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Gen. 1:10) and Peter became Christ's third disciple!
- C. As Jesus made His way north from Judaea where John the Baptist ministered toward Galilee, He found Philip of Bethsaida where Andrew and Peter lived, and He called him to be His disciple, John 1:43-44.
- D. Philip found Nathaniel and told him that they had found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Hebrew prophets had written, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, John 1:45.
- E. Like many others, Nathaniel had a low view of the Hebrews of Nazareth, so he asked how anything good could come from there, and Philip replied like Jesus did to His first two disciples, "Come and see," v. 46, 39a.
- F. Aware of Nathaniel's barrier to trusting in Him, when Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward Him, He spoke of Nathaniel's guilelessness, and Nathaniel asked how Jesus knew him, John 1:47-48a. Jesus said that before Philip called him, He had seen Nathaniel under the fig tree, and Nathaniel replied by calling Jesus Rabbi, the term of respect, and he claimed that Jesus was the Son of God and King of Israel, v. 48b-49. Nathaniel knew that only God could have seen him there and known he was thinking of the guile of Israel's forefather Jacob!
- G. Jesus added that in the Kingdom, Nathaniel would see heaven open and God's angels descend and ascend on the Son of man, John 1:50-51. Like Jacob about whom Nathaniel had thought under the fig tree, he would see God's glory in the ascent and descent of angels, but not on Jacob – on Jesus Christ! (cf. Genesis 28:10-22)

Lesson: *God moved in the hearts of those who heeded John's ministry to persuade them to believe in Jesus.*

Application: *(1) Like John the Baptist, Andrew and Philip, may we obey God's lead and do our part in the Great Commission and trust God to disciple those to whom we witness of the Lord. (2) If we witness to one who like a Nathaniel has barriers to faith in Christ in their background, may we just invite them to "Come and see" the Lord.*