

The Gospel of John

The Testimony of the Disciples

John 1:35-51

INTRODUCTION

This morning we are finishing chapter 1 in the Gospel of John.

I want to recall John's stated reason for writing this book.

³⁰ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ **but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31).**

John started his gospel by telling us of the preexistence of the Son of God that was to be revealed here in this gospel. So John begins by acquainting us with the main theme of his gospel. This, of course, is the "logos", the Word of God, the light of the world, Christ the savior.

Now John is going to depart from the overall description of the Messiah and get into the details of the life of Christ. He does so by the appearing and announcing of the coming of the Messiah as proclaimed first by John the Baptist, the prophesied forerunner of Christ, and now from the testimony of Christ's first chosen disciples.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 1:35-51 (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 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.”

Prayer

Christ's coming was the fulfillment of many prophecies made long, long, ago.

When we say that Jesus is the Christ, it is important that we understand what this term means. Many people tend to think that "Christ" is Jesus' last name. But we need to understand that Christ is just a Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah". That word simply means "**anointed one**".

So to say that Jesus is the Christ, we are saying that He is the prophesied Messiah.

Once again, I would like for you to put yourself in the mindset of Christ's first disciples (**Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael**). They only knew the Old Testament. The New Testament had not been written yet. The Jews had waited for thousands of years for the prophesied Messiah to arrive. Now John the Baptist was proclaiming that **the Messiah had arrived in the person of Jesus!** You can only imagine how much intrigue, how much suspense, how much anticipation is now building.

The disciple John records the testimony of **Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael** so we can experience their excitement and hear their testimony as they began to walk with Jesus and begin to recognize Him as the Messiah.

Here are the testimonies that the disciples made in our passage of scripture this morning.

- Andrew told Peter “**We have found the Messiah**” (verse 41).
- Philip told Nathanael “**We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.**” (verse 45).
- Nathanael told Jesus “**Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.**” (verse 49).

Christ's coming was the fulfillment of many prophecies made long, long, ago. The disciples were seeing those prophecies being fulfilled before their eyes in the person of Jesus. His coming was in essence a stamp of God's faithfulness to the covenant that He made to Abraham. God does not forget His promises!

Galatians 3:26-29 (NASB)

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Who are the seed of Abraham?

The seed of Abraham can be interpreted **three** ways, and it is important to make these distinctions.

1. There is the **Seed** of Abraham (*Seed* being singular). The (singular) Seed of Abraham, of course, is Christ.
2. There is the seed of Abraham **physically** (descendants of Abraham according to the flesh).
3. There is the seed of Abraham **spiritually** (those who, like Abraham, have faith in God).

All three of these distinctions are made in the testimonies of **Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael**.

I. THE SINGULAR SEED OF ABRAHAM - THE MESSIAH.

Galatians 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

Andrew and Philip said that **Jesus of Nazareth** was and is the prophesied **Messiah**.

Throughout the New Testament, we see proof that Jesus is the Chosen One:

The Samaritan woman at the well is one place where Jesus proclaimed this truth.

John 4:25-26 (NASB)

²⁵ The woman **said* to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." ²⁶ Jesus **said* to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

Just as Nathaniel told Jesus "**You are the Son of God!**" There are many more testimonies that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God".

Even the unbelievers could not deny that Jesus was the Son of God. The centurion and the guards around him during the crucifixion came to that conclusion based upon the events that occurred while Jesus was on the cross.

Matthew 27:54 (NASB)

⁵⁴ Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

The ultimate evidence that Jesus is indeed the promised Messiah, the Anointed One, is His resurrection from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 (NASB)

¹² Now if Christ (the Messiah) is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been

raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. ¹⁵ Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷ and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

The Jews of Jesus' day expected the Messiah to redeem Israel by overthrowing the rule of the Romans and establishing an earthly kingdom. They expected Him to be a earthly king instead of a spiritual king over the Kingdom of God. It wasn't until after Jesus' resurrection that His disciples finally began to understand what the prophecies in the Old Testament really meant concerning what the Messiah would do.

One of the prime examples is found in the appearance of Jesus walking with two men on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:13-31 (NASB)

¹³ And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." ²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

How I wish this conversation could have been recorded and made into a book. To hear Jesus in His own words describe the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament and how He fulfilled them. This would immediately be on the best sellers list.

II. THE PHYSICAL SEED - THE DESCENDANTS OF ISAAC.

Of course, the seed of Abraham can also refer to the Hebrew people who descended from Abraham through Isaac. Still more broadly, the seed of Abraham could include Arabs, who trace their lineage through Ishmael. This is the physical seed of Abraham.

Philip told Nathanael **“We have found...the son of Joseph.”** The genealogies in the scripture confirm that Joseph was in that lineage as well as Mary through a different lineage.

The Jewish religious leaders of the first century took pride in that they were Abraham’s seed. They saw their physical connection to Abraham as a guarantee of God’s favor. This attitude kept them from seeing their need for repentance of the heart—and brought condemnation from John the Baptist, who warned them to repent.

Jesus dealt with the same issue later. In speaking to the unbelieving Jews, Jesus emphasized their need to receive His words as truth and obey His commands. They replied, **“We be Abraham’s seed”** (John 8:33). Jesus then rebukes them for plotting ways to murder Him; their stubborn response was again, **“Abraham is our father”** (verse 39a). At this, Jesus makes a distinction between the physical seed of Abraham and the true, spiritual seed of Abraham: **“If you were Abraham’s children . . . then you would do what Abraham did”** (verse 39b). The conversation heats up as the Jews for a third time reference their connection to Abraham: **“Are you greater than our father Abraham?”** they ask Jesus (verse 53). Jesus provokes them further: **“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad”** (verse 56). The Jews’ are incredulous that Jesus would claim to be a contemporary of Abraham, and that’s when Jesus brings the exchange to a climax with a claim to full deity: **“Very truly I tell you, . . . before Abraham was born, I am!”** (verse 58). In a fury, the Jews attempted to stone Jesus (verse 59), again proving that being the physical seed of Abraham is not enough—they had to be born again (John 3:3).

Paul sums up the difference between the seeds of Abraham since Jesus' death on the cross.

Romans 2:28-29 (NASB)

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

III. THE SPIRITUAL SEED OF ABRAHAM - THE CHURCH.

The Old Testament predicted a coming Deliverer, chosen by God to redeem Israel. The Jews called this Deliverer the Messiah.

Nathanael told Jesus **“You are the King of Israel.”** When Jesus died on the cross, He defeated Satan and set up the Kingdom of God of which He is the king. The spiritual seed of Abraham (believers in Jesus Christ) is comprised of people of all nationalities and ethnicities.

Just as Abraham believed God and his faith was counted as righteousness, so are all today who believe in God’s Son justified apart from the Law. In this way, Abraham is the “father” of all who believe.

As we read earlier,

Galatians 3:29 (NASB)

²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

The Messiah was "anointed" first to deliver His people *spiritually*; that is, to redeem them from sin. He accomplished this salvation through His death and resurrection.

CONCLUSION:

John's desire was that we would read of these testimonies and believe.

John 20:24-29 (NASB)

²⁴ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

²⁶ After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus *came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace *be* with you."

²⁷ Then He *said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing."

²⁸ Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus *said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? **Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.**"

³⁰ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ **but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**

The Family of God.