

The Gospel of John (1:19-51)

A House Church Outline



1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did you share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.

4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

• **Notes for the facilitator**

- Vs 19: Jews - i.e. the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish authority
- Vs 25: Since they were the leaders in charge of God's work, they wanted to investigate who John was. They were in essence saying: What right/authority do you have to pose as a reformer without our permission?
- Vs 28: Sandal strap I am not worthy to unloose – Jewish disciples could do everything for their masters but in order to preserve their dignity, one thing was prohibited: to tie or untie their teacher's sandals. John shows his incredible humility by feeling unworthy of even doing the one task of forbidden to disciples of his day *(Paulien, Amplifier Bible: John, p. 59)*
- Vs 29: Lamb of God – John here identifies the suffering Messiah as the antitype of the Old Testament sacrificial system
- Vs 31: I did not know Him – John and Jesus had no communication with each other prior to Jesus' baptism. Providence ordered it so lest they be charged with conspiring to support each others' claims
- Vs 34: Son of God – 'Son' is used broadly in the Bible. One of its meanings is to express the very nature or innate qualities of the person who is being referred to. E.g. Acts 13:10 – son of the devil – a reference to person who is evil by nature. Son of man indicates someone who has a human nature. Similarly, 'Son of God' means having a divine nature, being 'very God'. See John 5:18; cf. 10:31-33; Matt 26:64-65.
- Vs 38: What do you seek? - Jesus wanted to hear what is in their hearts, why were they seeking Him. "He would leave them free to turn back or speak of their desire." (DA 138)
- Vs 38: Where are you staying? – "They desired to be alone with Jesus, to sit at His feet and hear His words" (DA 138). Disciples want to spend time with Jesus personally.

- Witnessing lessons from Andrew and Philip
 - Their goal was to point people to Jesus
 - Andrew did not delay (vs 41). It is assumed that Philip did not either.
 - Both worked with those closest (family and friends)
 - Philip did not enter into controversy (vs 46). It is implied about Andrew as well.
- Parallels between John the Baptist and the end-time church
 - Both prepare people for the arrival of Jesus (John 1:23, cf. Luke 3:4-6)
 - Both are called to boldly preach the word of God – messages of repentance and judgement (Luke 3:7-9 / Mal. 4:5-6; Rev. 14:6-12)
 - Both experience suffering and persecution for their faith (Matt. 14:3-5 / Rev. 12:17)
 - Both are live God-centred lives (cf. John 3:27-30 / Rev. 14:4)
 - Both are called to simplicity in lifestyle, diet and dress (Matt. 3:4 / 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 3:3-4)
 - ⇒ **Note:** The English word 'locust' denotes both an insect and a certain kind of tree. The carob tree is the most likely reference to the 'locust' of John's diet because:
 - Insect locusts are a poor source of food and incapable of sustaining life.
 - Most of the Greek Fathers saw locusts as a reference to 'fruits' or the tender 'tips of branches of trees or herbs'.
 - The Oxford dictionary says 'locust' is applied in the eastern part of the Mediterranean to the carob pod
 - In modern Arabic the word 'nabat' designating the insect locust is similarly applied to the carob tree
 - Ellen White says that John's diet was vegetarian (3T 62; CH 72)
- Vs 48: Under the fig tree – "... Nathanael had withdrawn to a quiet grove to meditate upon the announcement of John and the prophecies concerning the Messiah. **He prayed that if the one announced by John was the deliverer, it might be made known to him**, and the Holy Spirit rested upon him with assurance that God had visited His people.... Philip knew that his friend was searching the prophecies, and while Nathanael was praying under a fig tree, Philip discovered his retreat.... The message, 'We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write,' seemed to Nathanael a direct answer to his prayer.... Jesus [later] saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' In surprise Nathanael exclaimed, 'Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.' It was enough. **The divine Spirit that had borne witness to Nathanael in his solitary prayer under the fig tree now spoke to him in the words of Jesus.** Though in doubt, and yielding somewhat to prejudice, Nathanael had come to Christ with an honest desire for truth, and now his desire was met" (DA 140)
 - Jesus once again confirmed his insight into Nathanael's life by telling him what he was doing before Philip met him. He was startled that his life lay open like a book before Jesus.
- **Vs 51: Angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man** - The figure is evidently based on Jacob's dream at Bethel (Gen. 28:12). "Here Christ virtually says ... If you believe on Me as such, your faith shall be quickened. You shall see that **the heavens are opened, and are never to be closed.** I have opened them to you. The angels of God are ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and descending, bringing blessing and hope, courage, help, and life, to the children of men. The angels of God are ever passing from earth to heaven, and from

heaven to earth. The miracles of Christ for the afflicted and suffering were wrought by the power of God through the ministration of the angels. And it is **through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing comes from God to us**. In taking upon Himself humanity, our Saviour unites His interests with those of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, while through His divinity He grasps the throne of God. And thus **Christ is the medium of communication of men with God, and of God with men**" (DA 142-143).

- *Read John 1:19-51. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** *(use only a few). The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - Why do you think the Jews of Jerusalem sent a delegation to question John?
 - Compare healthy forms of authority within the church versus unhealthy ones?
 - What was John's attitude to Jesus (vs 26-27)? Why do you think this attitude so critical in the Christian journey?
 - What freedom comes from knowing we are not the savior or hope of the world? (vs 20-21)
 - How is John's life and mission of preparing the way for the Lord similar to that of God's end time church? Share practical points of comparison.
 - Why do you think John called Jesus the 'Lamb of God'?
 - Why do you think John did not physically meet Jesus before His baptism (vs 31, 33)?
 - Why do you think Jesus asked the 2 disciples who followed Jesus, 'What do you seek?' (vs 38)
 - What are some witnessing lessons we can gain from Andrew and Philip?
 - What is the cost of following Jesus? How does it affect our livelihood, family, relationships, etc.? (vs 43) *[ask one question at a time]*
 - In what ways can we miss great spiritual blessings due to prejudice? (vs 46)
 - What do you think Jesus meant when he said that Nathanael would see heaven open and angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man? Give practical ways in which Christ serves as Ladder between heaven and earth? *(ask one question at a time)*
- **Application Questions** *(select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT)*
 - John the Baptist repeatedly redirects attention away from himself and towards Jesus. Is this true of you, your life, your attitude? Is this true of your witness? Elaborate.
 - Which friend / family member / colleague do you need to introduce to Jesus this week/month?
 - Share a few blessings that have come into your life because Christ, as Ladder, has linked heaven with earth?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "I will pray for my next door neighbour's salvation this week, and then invite the family over for a meal next weekend."

6. Share *(Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith)*

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer

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