

## **"WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH."**

– JOHN 1:35-51. – JANUARY 15. –

*"Thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel."*

JOHN'S Gospel was written after the other three, and quite evidently with a view to setting forth matters not set forth in the other Gospels. Thus we find that it does not attempt to give a full history of the Lord's ministry in all particulars, but chiefly deals either with matters omitted or with details not given by the others. Our present lesson furnishes details respecting the gathering of the first apostles to the Lord. Much of its interest centers in the fact that it well illustrates the diversity of the Lord's dealings and providences as these are still exercised in the world in the drawing of others to himself, some in one way and some in another.

While the Scriptures inform us that at the time of the Lord's presentation "All men were in expectation of him," of Messiah, nevertheless we are to remember that all were expecting something totally different from what the Lord presented. They were expecting a personage of high rank, of great influence, of striking and commanding character; and our Lord, if he had been an impostor, would have sought to fill this public expectation. Either he would have given them to believe he controlled wealth and influence, or he would at least have been boastful and heady, thereby making up for any deficiencies along the line of their expectation. By a studied exclusiveness of manner, and haughty disdain of the poor and the sinful, an impostor would have sought to rank himself in the public estimation by claiming the possession of every noble and lofty sentiment above others. He was of the royal tribe of Judah – more than this, he was of the royal family of David – and had he been an impostor we may be sure that this relationship to the kingly line, and references to divine prophecy respecting the same, would have been flaunted on every possible occasion. On the contrary, we find our Lord "meek and lowly of heart" – not bombastic, not boastful, not self-obtrusive. Bearing these things in mind we see all the more clearly why

he attracted special characters for his disciples, and why he failed to attract the masses: we see that it was the Father's design that he should attract to himself as disciples the meek and lowly of heart, the reverential, the sincere, and that he should more or less repel the worldly wise, the rulers, and the masses who subsequently crucified him. Let us note, too, that these same principles of attraction and repulsion have persisted throughout this Gospel age and are still operative. The masses may be temporarily influenced, and even say "Never man spake like this man," or again, "When Messiah cometh can he do greater works than this man doeth?" But the masses will not be attracted, because the Lord does not wish to attract those whose hearts are not in the proper attitude of consecration and faith. Consequently, all down through the Gospel age, those who have been the Lord's followers in the highest and truest sense of the word, "forsaking all to follow him," have been comparatively few, and, as described by the Apostle, "Not many [R3482 : page 7] great, not many wise, not many learned, not many noble according to the course of this world, but the poor of this world, rich in faith" – shall be heirs of the Kingdom.

### **LOVE BOASTETH NOT – VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF.**

Notice the quiet, unostentatious, meek manner in which our Redeemer began the announcement of his mission. Quietly he presented himself to John for baptism, and after receiving there the anointing of the holy Spirit he went into absolute seclusion in the wilderness for more than a month, for forty days studying what the divine plan had arranged to be his course. True, he did not have the Bible, but he had the perfect memory, and for thirty years he had heard the reading of the Law and the prophets in the Synagogue and was thoroughly familiar with them. He had the entire matter before his mind, and under the light of the holy Spirit he weighed the various declarations of the Law and prophets, noted the course of sacrifice which these meant, his temptation lying in the suggestion that easier, less sacrificing courses seemed to present themselves as feasible. He triumphed over all the Adversary's allurements and blandishments – determined not to do, Satan's will, nor even follow

his own judgment, but strictly and implicitly follow and obey the outlined program which the Father had laid down in the Word. He returned to John, seeking companionship with those who were nearest to the Lord and waiting for divine providence to guide in his affairs.

It was at this time, in the presence of his disciples, that John prophesied of Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Andrew and John were disciples of John the Baptist, and when they thus heard his testimony respecting Jesus and the declaration that he had a witness from God that Jesus was the Messiah, they sought the Lord's acquaintance. They followed after him, overtook him, and inquired where he was stopping. Apparently their object was to learn of him, to ascertain what further blessings the Lord had, and what further service than that they had engaged in with John the Baptist. They wanted the best that was to be had. They had not the partisan spirit to say, "We belong to John the Baptist and must stand up for him," as some of the Lord's dear people are inclined to do in respect to the various denominations. There were some of John's disciples who heard his testimony who did not seek to become followers of the Lamb of God, but who were quite content to remain John's disciples. We may properly enough suppose that being content with the lesser blessing and privilege implied that they were not so worthy of the higher privileges and blessings. They doubtless never became apostles, though some of them, probably, became followers of Jesus after the imprisonment of John.

John does not mention the other disciple that went with Andrew on this occasion, but this seems to have been his modest style of omitting special mention of himself. The two spent the remainder of the day with **[R3482 : page 8]** the Lord, and doubtless "learned of him," much to their comfort and joy and the establishment of their faith. The record is "They abode with him." This may refer to the temporary stay of one day, but it may with equal propriety be understood to mean that they remained with the Lord as his disciples thereafter – to the very end of life. We remember on one occasion, when some took offence at certain teachings of our Lord which they did not understand, how our Lord addressing the

twelve said, "Will ye also go away?" But Peter answered, "Lord, to whom should we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," we must abide with you. So it should be with all of us who have become the Lord's followers. We are not his disciples for a day, but for all eternity. We abide with him in loyalty of heart whether we go to seek others or whether we listen to words at his feet, and he abides with us, as expressed in his own statement, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

"Not a brief glance I beg, a parting word;  
But as thou dwell'st with thy disciples, Lord;  
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,  
Come, not to sojourn, but abide, with me!"

On the basis of that brief acquaintance, John and Andrew started forthwith to find others and bring them to the Master. The intimation of the Greek text is that Andrew and John both started out, each to find his own brother and bring him to the Lord, and that Andrew found his brother first, implying that John found his brother, James, a little later.

There are some points here that are well worthy of our attention:

(1) Andrew and John were not content to have the great blessing of fellowship with the Lord alone; they desired to make known their great find.

(2) They did not attempt to influence others until they were fully satisfied themselves and could give a definite, positive message, saying, "We have found the Messiah" – the Christ. (Messias is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew word Messiah, and is the equivalent of the Greek word Christ, which means the Anointed One.)

(3) They did not go to benighted heathen, speaking a different language. They did not say, "Our brethren and all the Jews here are already God's people and good enough and instructed enough by the scribes and Pharisees, and we will go and hunt up some outside Gentiles." They did not even say, "We will go and look up some of those sinners

who are coming to John for baptism, and who ought to know about Messiah, the great Sin-Bearer." They did better than either of these things – they thought first of all about their own brethren, brethren according to the flesh, and in this case brethren also in religious faith and effort. There is a lesson here for us, easily applied: Our first duties lie toward those who are near to us as neighbors, friends, and especially as members of our own family circles. We should begin the proclamation of the Messiah whom we have found with them; then, after they fail to hear, or after they have heard the way of God, proclaim it to the next in turn, and so on and on.

This is the very plan we are pursuing at the present time, and to which some of our dear friends in the various denominations object. They say, "Take your tracts and books to the sinners, or go to the heathen." We reply that the message ought to go first of all to those who ought to be the most ready for it. They answer us that they have Moses and the prophets and the doctrines of the Dark Ages, but we reply that these only obscurely disclose the real character and the plan of God, and the real Messiah and his great work. We fain would tell all of them who have ears to hear and hearts to appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths, that they may appreciate with us the love of God which passeth all human understanding. This is our proper course, too, whether they hear or whether they forbear, and as the testimony goes on the circle will widen. It is widening, as reports in our last issue show. The knowledge of the King of kings and the Kingdom which he is about to establish is scattered throughout Great Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, France, Italy, Australia, etc. We seek to cultivate the best fields and find them nearest home, but as the numbers and implements increase we extend operations in the name of the Lord, and with the firm conviction that ultimately in this harvest time he will find every true heart, every one fitted to be a disciple.

### **KNOWING JESUS AS THE MESSIAH.**

Many have seen or heard of Jesus as those who were with John the Baptist heard of him, but have not learned to know him as the Messiah – the Christ. This word Messiah covers a particular thought that to-day is

very generally ignored amongst the Lord's professed followers. Remarkably few Christians know Jesus to be the Messiah at all. The word Messiah as already pointed out signifies the Anointed. The Jews, under the great promise made to Abraham, had been expecting a Messiah, a King, a Deliverer, who would exalt them as his special people and assistants, and use them in presenting the law of God to all peoples, nations and languages, and as authorized and empowered co-laborers to enforce those laws with rewards and penalties.

The word Messiah, or Anointed, thus signifies the great King who was looked for – the great Prophet, Priest and King – for prophets, priests and kings under the divine arrangement were anointed to their offices, and thus signified that in due time Christ would combine all three of these qualities in himself, and associate his Church with himself in the exercise of the various offices as joint-heirs in his Kingdom. The Scriptures show us that Israel as a nation was found unworthy to enter into all these blessings and privileges, and that, after selecting the Israelites indeed from that nation, the Lord has been gathering to himself and associating with him as his Church, as his spiritual Israel, the faithful ones who have ears to hear and hearts to obey the same message from every nation, kindred, people and tongue.

Thus we see that to recognize and speak of Jesus as the Messiah means to speak of him as the great King who ultimately shall reign to bless the whole world, as the great King whose joint-heirs in the Kingdom we hope to be, – members of his Bride. This grand work of the Redeemer and the grand privileges to which the elect are being called have been lost sight of under the delusions and misrepresentations of the Dark Ages, which have worked the minds of many of the Lord's people into a frenzy of confusion and fear of eternal torment, and led them to believe that escape from that torment was the salvation offered, causing this erroneous [R3483 : page 9] idea to take the place of the gracious hopes set before us in the Gospel, that if faithful we shall be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord in the great Kingdom for which he taught

us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

### **JESUS FOUND PHILIP.**

Note the varying methods of bringing the blessing to different persons. John the Baptist announced Jesus. Andrew and John heard him and sought the Lord. In turn they sought Peter and James, and now note a third method in Philip's case – the Lord himself found Philip. Particulars are not given, but we may be sure that in all these various findings the Lord had a hand, he was supervising. We are not to imagine that the Gospel work is left to chance. The Lord knoweth the heart, the Lord knoweth them that are his, and the Truth is specially sent to the Truth-hungry. We may safely say, all of us, that the Lord found us, else we should not be where we are or what we are. The poet has expressed this, saying,

"Yet he found me; I beheld him bleeding on the accursed tree;  
And my wistful heart said faintly, 'Some of self and some of thee'."

Nathanael's case was still different. Philip found him, but he was naturally sceptical, fearful that his friend was being led astray by a false hope to follow a false Messiah. Philip's message to him briefly summed up was, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and all the prophets did write." His name is Jesus, and he comes from a place called Nazareth. Nazareth did not have a very savory reputation for wisdom and piety. On the contrary, the Nazarenes were looked upon as rather a fanatical people, and Nathanael sceptically answered his friend Philip, Did you ever hear of anything good coming out of Nazareth? – what you say of this man seems to contradict any reasonable hope or expectation you may have.

All along, in every sense of the word, the Lord has allowed his Truth and his plan to come through channels more or less impaired. Our Lord Jesus seemed to have something of this kind in mind when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid



these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Luke 10:21.) The Lord hides his Truth in the sense of permitting it to come through unpopular channels. Sometimes the unpopularity is deserved and sometimes undeserved, but it always serves to keep away those who are not in the right attitude of heart. They are not, however, stumblings to the pure in heart, because the Lord will help them over these difficulties as he did in the case of Nathanael, under consideration.

### **A WORTHY MAN'S CHALLENGE.**

Philip's answer was, "Come and see;" test the matter for yourself if you are not satisfied – I have nothing more to say. Although nothing is said specially respecting Philip's character, we may reasonably assume from this incident that he was a man whose word and manner and general character had weight, that he was not given to foolishness of thought or word or conduct, otherwise Nathanael would have said within himself, if he had not said it to Philip, "I know you anyway to be rather flighty, always going off at a tangent," or, "I know you to be a man of poor moral character, and the thing which would commend itself to you would be discredited in my judgment in advance."

Alas, that such arguments should be forceful as against some of the Lord's followers who presume to invite others to him. In several instances we have known of the Present Truth being much injured by being advocated by some who were not of good character as well as by some not wise. It would be in the interest of the Truth that any such who have given their hearts to the Lord, and therefore have passed from the foolish and sinful condition to the justified relationship, should make well known the fact of their radical change, of their thorough conversion from sin to righteousness, from folly to wisdom, before they begin to invite their neighbors and friends to the Lord.

Repentance and reformation are therefore placed in the forefront in the instructions given us through the Lord's Word respecting our coming to him and our discipleship and service. "To the *wicked* [the unrepentant,



those not seeking to live according to the Lord's way, those walking after the flesh and not after the Spirit] God saith, What hast thou to do to take my name into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee."

### **"THE MEEK WILL HE GUIDE IN JUDGMENT."**

When Jesus saw Nathanael he made the way very clear for his faith to accept. His salutation was, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." This gives us a suggestion that it is entirely right for us to express at proper times our confidence in the religious character of those with whom we are conversing. We are neither to say, neither to think, nor in any sense of the word to manifest a doubt of the sincerity of all who are not fully with us in every point of faith and doctrine. On the contrary, we are to realize that any one whom we may expect to find interested in the message we have to present must beforehand be an Israelite indeed, without guile, without hypocrisy – otherwise the Truth would not appeal to his heart and the Lord would not bless him in connection with our service and message.

Nathanael evidently took it that the Lord was flattering him, and he rather repelled at first this forwardness on the Lord's part to speak of him in such praiseworthy terms without a knowledge of him, and he answered, "Whence knowest thou me?" Our Lord's answer shows clearly the divine care over all who are in the right attitude of heart, and how the Lord himself has the direction of his message and his ministers that they may find all the true wheat. With this in mind we have every assurance that not a single grain will be left with the tares in the field – that all will be gathered into the "barn" condition of glory.

The Lord's answer was, "I saw thee under the fig-tree before Philip called thee." How much that meant to Nathanael! He doubtless had already heard about his friend Philip having accepted one who was proclaimed the Messiah, he doubtless was fearful for himself as well as for Philip; and under these circumstances went to a fig-tree as a closet for prayer, for the fig-tree has foliage which hangs low and would constitute

it quite an arbor or shelter and a very suitable place for privacy and prayer. [R3483 : page 10]

We are not told of what took place under the fig-tree, but we are at some liberty to imagine that an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile there prayed to the heavenly Father for wisdom, for guidance, for instruction, for protection from deception, whether it came through his friend Philip or however it might come, that he might not be misled into following a false Messiah. And now to hear this one refer to his very prayer, his very petition, of which not a soul in the world had knowledge, and to tell him that this was before Philip had called him, meant to Nathanael that the Lord had supervised in the matter and had full knowledge of all his affairs, and therefore he had the assurance that the one he had come to under the guidance of Philip was none other than

**"THE SON OF GOD, THE KING OF ISRAEL."**

Addressing Nathanael and the other disciples incidentally, our Lord said, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater works than these," than this sure evidence of my Messiahship. As an Israelite indeed you are in the attitude of heart which would permit you to receive the Lord's blessing and to have the eyes of your understanding opened wider and wider to an appreciation of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Lord's great plan of salvation which centers in me. "Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye [all of my disciples, all who will follow me in the narrow way] shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Our Lord evidently by this expression called the attention of his hearers and of all his followers back to the days of Jacob and the vision which he had at Bethel, in which he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven on which angels of God were ascending and descending. Our Lord would have us understand that Jacob's vision was a pictorial illustration of the methods of divine grace: that our Lord himself was the ladder upon which communication between heaven and earth would be reestablished.

And so, as our eyes of understanding open, we increasingly see this is the case. Upon this ladder, upon this connecting link between heaven and earth, between God and man, have descended to us the angels of divine favor, messages of love and mercy, forgiveness and adoption, and on this same ladder are messages returned to the Father, our prayers. We are accepted in the Beloved, we enter into the holies by faith, we receive the incoming and send back again the outgoing messages and messengers, and all of them upon the ladder, the connecting link, the Son of man, our Lord and Master, through whom alone we have access and relationship to the Father, and receive from him the exceeding great and precious things not only of this present life but also of that which is to come.

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[R3487 : page 10]

### **MY BEAUTIFUL SECRET.**

"I have learned a beautiful secret,  
I know not how or where –  
But I know it is sweet and precious,  
And true, and glad, and fair;  
And that God in heaven reveals it  
To all that have ears to hear.

"And I know that ere I learned it,  
My way was weary and hard,  
And somewhere in life's music  
There was always that which jarred –  
A hidden and dreary discord,  
That all its sweetness marred.

"But my harp of life was lifted  
By One who knew the range  
Of its many strings – for he made it,  
And he struck a keynote strange;

And beneath the touch of the Master  
I heard the music change.

"No longer it failed and faltered;  
No longer sobbed and strove;  
But it seemed to soar and mingle  
With the song of heaven above;  
For the pierced hand of the Master  
Had struck the keynote – Love.

"Thy heart's long-prisoned music  
Let the Master's hand set free!  
Let him whisper his beautiful secret  
To thee, as he hath to me:  
'My Love is the Golden Keynote  
Of all my will for thee."

– *E. D. Cherry.*

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