

**The Gospel of John (10);
The Prelude to the Public Ministry of Jesus (1:19-51) (part 5)**

Introduction:

We are continuing to study what has been called, “The Prelude to the Public Ministry of Jesus”, which is contained in John 1:19-51. This is the fifth Lord’s Day we have addressed this portion of this Fourth Gospel. To this point the emphasis has been on the witness that John the Baptist gave forth of Jesus. But that witness came to its conclusion with John declaring the second of two great truths regarding Jesus as the promised Christ. The first great declaration of truth regarding Jesus was that He was “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29). And then the second great declaration of truth that John gave of Jesus was that it was “He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (1:34). As we emphasized last Lord’s Day, these are the two great works of God in bringing us salvation. First, He secures through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ the forgiveness of the sins of all of His people from all over the world. And second, Jesus the Lord, that is, the promised King over the Kingdom of God, enables His people to live lives of obedience and holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit that He imparts to them. Both forgiveness and holiness are essential aspects of salvation, which God has freely given to us through His Son Jesus Christ.

Here, again, is the outline of John 1 that we have been using. I emboldened that portion that we will address today.

- I. The Prologue of the Gospel of John (1:1-18)
- II. The Prelude to the Public Ministry of Jesus (1:19-51)
 - A. The Witness of John the Baptist (1:19-34)
 - 1. John and “the Jews” (1:19-28)
 - 2. John and Jesus (1:29-34)
 - B. The First Disciples (1:35-51)**
 - 1. Andrew and Peter (1:35-42)**
 - 2. Philip and Nathaniel (1:43-51)

Here is that portion of the Prelude in which Jesus is brought to the forefront of the story, even as John the Baptist fades into the foreground.

³⁵Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

³⁷The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?”

They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”

³⁹He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

All four Gospels present John the Baptist as introducing Jesus to Israel. His ministry of proclamation, calling people to repent of their sins and to be baptized with view to God’s forgiveness of their sins, was in

view of, and preparation for, the very soon inauguration of the long-anticipated, promised Kingdom of God. The Kingdom was at hand (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:16; John 1:26). The King would soon appear. John was the one who prepared the way by first preparing the people. He then would declare its commencement when he identified Jesus to Israel and ultimately to the world as the Promised King.

All four Gospels begin with the ministry of John the Baptist, who is described as a forerunner who announces the person and ministry of Jesus. But the Baptist is displayed differently in John's Gospel, giving a more emphatic prophetic-apostolic witness to Jesus. The Baptist introduces Jesus not merely to Israel but the world – even the reader of the Gospel. It is through the self-effacement of the one who offered “renewal cleansings” that our attention is drawn to the one who can truly cleanse and renew.¹

Now this last portion of John 1 contains information regarding the first disciples of Jesus. The focus of this passage is the self-witness of Jesus and of his initial disciples. There are two sections to this passage. The first is contained in verses 35 through 42, which speak of **Andrew and Peter** becoming disciples of Jesus (1:35-42). The second section tells of **Philip and Nathaniel** becoming disciples of Jesus (1:43-51). We will only address the first of these today.

1. Andrew and Peter (1:35-42)

We first read that John the Baptist pointed two of his disciples to Jesus, thereby transitioning them from being his disciples to becoming disciples of Jesus. We read in **verse 35**, “*Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.*”³⁶ *And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”*

It was the Baptist's mission to point men to Jesus. In the previous section we have seen him bearing witness. Now we find him sending some of his followers after the Lord.²

The Evangelist provides the time frame as “**the next day.**” We have not addressed in great detail the time element of this first chapter of the Gospel. If we did, we would realize that this is third day of the narrative, the first was when John engaged the embassy from “the Jews” of Jerusalem (vs. 19ff). The second day is when Jesus saw John coming toward him and he made the announcement, “Behold the Lamb of God” (v. 29ff). Here in verse 35 the third day commences in which two of his disciples become disciples of Jesus.

We read that John was standing there with two of his disciples, “*John stood with two of his disciples.*” Jesus had disciples. John the Baptist also had disciples. Later we read of that John had sent two of his disciples to inquire of the identity and ministry of Jesus. We read in Luke 7:18f.

The disciples of John reported all these things to him (John the Baptist). And John,¹⁹ calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”

Even John the Baptist had questions when Jesus whom he had identified and baptized, was not exhibiting the kind of ministry that he and all other Jews thought that the Messiah would demonstrate.

It would appear that John's disciples lived according to different religious standards than the disciples of Jesus. John's disciples lived more in accordance with what was regarded as devout and consecrated living according to the Jews and their understanding of the laws and traditions. We read this in **Matthew 9:14f**:

¹⁴Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

¹ Edward W. Klink, III, *John*. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Zondervan, 2016), p. 137.

² Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (William B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 155.

¹⁵And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples in manners and ways consistent with the new covenant that He would be instituting rather than according to the old covenant that had been established with Israel by Moses. Moreover, it must be assumed that the disciples of John the Baptist also ordered their lives according to much of the formal tradition of the rabbis, from which the Lord Jesus would direct His disciples not to look.

We read in **verse 36**, “*And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”*” John declared the same message the day before. Verse 29 reads, “The next day (the day before this day of verse 36) John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” After John had initially identified Jesus as the Promised One, he continually bore witness to all who would hear him whenever he saw Him.

Verse 37 records, “*The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*” Most of Jesus’ first disciples had probably been formerly disciples of John. When the eleven apostles felt the need to replace Judas Iscariot, they had two criteria:

“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” (Acts 1:21f)

However, apparently not all the disciples had been disciples of John the Baptist. It would seem quite certain that the Lord Jesus called Levi, who would be named Matthew, to become one of His disciples even while he was serving at his tax table as a corrupt Jewish man who had long departed from the ways of the faithful in Israel (Cf. Luke 5:27). The Lord called several of his disciples in Galilee while they were fishermen. He later made them apostles. But it is not stated with respect to each one of them that they had been disciples of John the Baptist or even if they had been baptized by him, although it is likely they had been.

But not only did John baptize with view to the coming Kingdom, Jesus also had a ministry of baptizing His disciples. The time arrived when Jesus’ disciples were baptizing more new disciples than John’s disciples. We read in John 4:1ff these words:

Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ²(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), ³He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

It is possible that some of His apostles had initially been baptized by Jesus, that is, by His disciples who were with Him.

And so, we read that two disciples of John became disciples of Jesus.

The text does not tell us that the Baptist expected his followers to become disciples of Jesus. Certainly some remained attached to John even after his death (Cf. Acts 19:1ff.). But in the light of John the Baptist’s self-perception as the forerunner of the Coming One, it is reasonable to assume that at least some of his disciples, those perhaps who understood him best, discerned that their master was constantly pointing beyond himself to another. Once he had identified the Coming One, it was only to be expected that some of them would follow Jesus. In doing so, the two disciples mentioned here are not scurrilously

abandoning the Baptist in favour of a more prestigious leader, but are being truest to the teaching of the forerunner. This John the Baptist understood.³

This reveals the noble and humble character of John the Baptist, to see his own numbers dwindling even as those who left him went to another. But he saw this as the realization of his mission, even the aspirations of his ministry. We read of this spirit later in John's Gospel:

John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' ²⁹He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:27-30)

May this spirit characterize church leaders, particularly pastors. One of the most difficult aspects of the ministry within a local church setting is when members choose to leave your church in order to join another church. Every time that occurs, there is a measure of soul-searching on the part of the pastor, or at least there should be. Ultimately, however, the way to deal with the disappointment and self-doubting is to reaffirm that we are seeking to advance the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus. And if we have had a time in which to help or direct a Christian in seeking that Kingdom and His righteousness, then we should be pleased to have done so. But sadly, all too often a pastor may view himself in competition with other churches or worse, measure himself and his worth as a pastor by comparing his work with other men and their ministries and how they seem to be doing. The bottom line in this matter is to determine if one has been faithful to the Lord and His people. And then realizing of course, that the true nature of things is going to be revealed by the Lord when He returns. If we were thinking rightly, we would rejoice when we learn of the Lord's blessing of another's ministry or another church. We are concerned that the Kingdom of our Lord be furthered, which is much broader than what takes place in our own little church.

When these two disciples began to follow Jesus, we read of our Lord's reaction to them. **Verse 38a** records that "*Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, 'What do you seek?'*" This is a good question to ask initially of someone who shows some interest in spiritual matters. "What are you seeking?" By this question that one is led to examine his own understanding of spiritual matters and his motivation for "seeking." But sometimes a person is unable to answer this very basic question. All he or she knows is that an interest has arisen in his soul. He may know that he has needs, but he is too spiritually ignorant to identify or specify what it is he wants or needs. But sometimes an answer to such a question like this reveals the true nature of a person, or at least the extent to which the Lord has awakened or informed him of his spiritual need. It would seem that these two men did not know themselves how to answer the Lord's question posed to them. Of course we know that even when the Lord asked these men, "What do you seek?", in reality, He was seeking them. For we know that fallen man if left to himself, would never truly seek the true God. Paul would quote the Psalmist, "There is none that seeks after God" (Rom. 3:10).

Of course these disciples did not know that God had His purposes toward them being realized at this time. They were as we all were at this stage of initially coming to Jesus. It is as the words of the hymn that we occasionally sing:

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me.
It was not I that found, O Savior true;
No, I was found of Thee.⁴

³ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (William B. Eerdmans. 1991), p. 154.

⁴ *The Trinity Hymnal*, #466, "I Sought the Lord", written by George W. Chadwick, 1893.

We read in verse 38b, “*They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”*” They called Him “Rabbi.” The Evangelist, that is, the Gospel writer translated this Aramaic word: “*which is to say, when translated, Teacher.*” This reveals that the Evangelist was addressing principally a non-Jewish readership. The common opinion of evangelicals is that this Fourth Gospel was written in or around Ephesus toward the end of the first century. The readers would have been largely Gentiles, who were largely unfamiliar with the terms and titles of Hebrew within the religion of Judaism.

That these two men addressed Jesus as “Rabbi” shows their high regard for Jesus as well as their desire to learn from Him.

In calling him *Rabbi*, they intimated that their design in coming to him was to be *taught by him*; *rabbi* signifies a *master*, a teaching master; the Jews called their doctors, or learned men, *rabbies*. The word comes from *rab*, *multus* or *magnus*, a *rabbi*, a *great man*, and one that, as we say, has *much in him*. Never was there such a *rabbi* as our Lord Jesus, such a *great one*, in whom were *hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. These came to Christ to be his scholars, so must all those that apply themselves to him. John had told them that he was the *Lamb of God*; now this *Lamb* is worthy to *take the book and open the seals* as a *rabbi* (Rev. 5:9). And, unless we give up ourselves to be ruled and taught by him, he will not *take away our sins*.⁵

They had asked Jesus, “*“where are You staying?”*” Jesus did not tell them, but simply directed them. **Verse 39** records, “*He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).*”

Jesus said to them, “Come and see.” Perhaps it should be understood as the Lord saying, “Come, and you will see.”⁶ There is no doubt that this invitation “doubtless delighted the Baptist’s disciples, and constituted the beginning of their intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.”⁷ (Can you imagine the privilege and joy of such a day!)

Here in verse 39 we again we see betrayed a non-Jewish reader. The Evangelist commonly used the standard Roman designations for time, as his Gentile readers would have been accustomed to use. The Romans would begin counting hours of the day beginning at midnight, as we do today. The Synoptic writers commonly used Jewish time references, which counted the hours beginning with the dawn of the day. But it is not always that easy of a matter to sort out the statements of time contained in the Gospels. Here are **William Hendriksen’s** words which depict the difficulty of the issue:

Commentators will probably never agree on the meaning of the expression *the tenth hour*. Does this mean *the tenth hour after sunrise*; hence, about 4 P.M.? This would be in accordance with the Jewish method of computing time, recognized in the Synoptics. But the same method was frequently used among the Romans. The latter, however, in counting the hours, also started from midnight and from noon, as we do today. They employed the latter method in order to designate the hours of their *civil* day (e.g. in dating leases and contracts). However, contemporary records do not make clear just where the one method of figuring the hours ended and the other began. Usage probably differed in different regions. Accordingly, the expression “the tenth hour” can mean 4 P.M. or 10 A.M. or even 10 P.M. However, the context makes it quite impossible to think of 10 P.M. As to the choice between 4 P.M. and 10 A.M. we believe (with A. Edersheim, A. T. Robertson, F. W. Grosheide, and many others) that much can be said in favor of the latter:

⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 5 (Fleming H. Revell Company, n. d., originally 1721), p. 864.

⁶ Carson, p. 155.

⁷ *Ibid.*

(1) John is writing at the close of the first century, His readers are Christians from among the Gentiles (mostly). Hence, he does not need to use the Jewish method of counting the hours. He *may have* used the Roman civil-day method.

(2) In 20:19 the author *must* mean the Roman day. If there, why not here?

(3) The context would seem to favor this interpretation. We read, “They remained with him *that day*.” Had it been 4 P.M., we would have expected, “They remained with him *that evening*.” Cf. Luke 24:49. Also if *the tenth hour* means 10 A.M., there is a sufficient time *on that same day* for the search which resulted in the bringing in of two more disciples: Simon Peter and (in all probability) James. (See verses 41, 42.)

(4) This method of computing the hours also suits the circumstances better in other passages of this Gospel. (See our explanation of 4:6 and of 4:52.)

(5) This time-calculation brings 19:14 into harmony with Mark 15:25.⁸ If in both of these passages the hours are counted from sunrise, there is hopeless conflict.⁹

I suspect that the time that Jesus told these men to come to where he was staying was either at 10 AM. or at 4 P.M.¹⁰ They spent the remainder of the day with Jesus.

We next read of the identity of one of these two disciples. We read **verse 40**, “*One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.*” Andrew later became one of the original 12 apostles (Cf. Matt. 10:1ff). Because the first thing that Andrew did was to find his brother and bring him to Jesus, he has commonly been referred to as *the first Christian missionary*. Andrew was from Bethsaida of Galilee. He met and followed Jesus while in Judea, where he had been a disciple of John the Baptist. He seemed to be one who was always willing to help others. We read the following references of him:

John 6:4-10.

Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” ⁶But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

⁷Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

⁸One of His disciples, **Andrew**, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ⁹“There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

¹⁰Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.”

John 12:20-22.

²⁰Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. ²¹Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

²²Philip came and told **Andrew**, and in turn **Andrew** and Philip told Jesus.

⁸ John 19:14 reads, “Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about *the sixth hour*. And he said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’” Mark 15:25 reads, “Now it was *the third hour*, and they crucified Him.” The only way these two references are harmonized is if one used a different standard of keeping time from the other. On another note, most believe that Jesus hung upon His cross for a total of three hours and then He died. This is based on the biblical record that the sky was darkened for a period of 3 hours. But actually, Mark’s account records clearly that Jesus hung upon His cross for a total of 6 hours before He died. The darkness began at the beginning of His fourth hour on the cross (see Mark 15:25, 33).

⁹ William Hendriksen, *John*, New Testament Commentary (Baker Academic, 1953), pp. 104f.

¹⁰ D. A. Carson thought that it was 4 PM, See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (William B. Eerdmans, 1991), p. 155.

According to tradition, soon after our Lord ascended to His throne in heaven, Andrew preached the gospel in Jerusalem. It is said that he then traveled extensively preaching the gospel in many parts of the Roman Empire. However, when he was in the region of Greece, he strongly and persistently rebuked the leader, Aegeas, of his idolatry. The result was threatened death if Andrew persisted in his faith, or, great riches if he recanted the faith and offered sacrifice to their idols. Tradition has it that he was crucified, being nailed to a cross which was in the form of an X, which became the source of what is commonly known as “Saint Andrew’s Cross.”¹¹

We read that immediately after Andrew came to follow Jesus, he left and found his brother, Simon. We read in **verse 41** and **42**, “*He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.*” Andrew *first* found his own brother Simon.¹² “Each time Andrew is mentioned in the narrative, he is bringing someone to Jesus (6:8, 9; 12:22).”¹³

Andrew brought Simon to *Jesus*. This is essentially what we attempt to do in our witnessing for Jesus Christ. Yes, there are essential doctrines that must be taught those we would have come to Jesus, doctrines that must be understood and believed if one is to receive salvation. But the aim of all of our effort is to bring them unto the person and into the presence of Jesus that they might know Him, that they might become His disciples. Andrew serves as an ideal disciple of Jesus, who was concerned to bring another to the Savior.¹⁴

By the way, notice here again that the Evangelist translated the Hebrew word, Messiah, into the Greek equivalent “Christ.” Here, again, we see that the Evangelist was writing to Gentiles who were not necessarily familiar with Hebrew terms.

Andrew used the Hebrew word, “Messiah”, which the Evangelist translates for his readers as “the Christ.” What did Andrew mean by this declaration? It would have conformed to the Jewish expectation of the day. **F. F. Bruce** set this forth quite well and clearly:

‘We have found the Messiah,’ said Andrew. This Semitic verbal adjective does not appear in the New Testament except in this Gospel, where it is found twice – here and in 4:25. In both places it is interpreted by the Greek equivalent *christos*. In the OT the verbal adjective is used to denote the king of Israel (‘the Lord’s anointed’, as in 1 Samuel 16:6, etc.), the high priest (‘the anointed priest’, as in Leviticus 4:3, etc.) and once, in the plural, of the patriarchs in their role as prophets (‘my anointed ones’, Psa. 105:15). While the messianic expectation at the outset of the Christian era took a predominantly royal form, in actual fulfillment Jesus proved himself to be the Messiah *par excellence* in all three roles: prophet, priest, and king. What Andrew would have meant at this time by the title Messiah cannot be stated with certainty; his understanding would no doubt have been coloured by contemporary forms in which the hope of Israel was cherished. But as he and his fellow-disciples came to know Jesus better, earlier conceptions of the Messiah and his achievement were displaced in their minds by the actual character and ministry of Jesus.¹⁵

We read that our Lord renamed Simon, Cephas. **Verse 43** reads, “*Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).*” When the Evangelist wrote that Jesus “looked at him”, he did so in a manner that suggested a thorough penetrating look that gave Him a settled assessment of the man. “Jesus regarded Simon closely, studied him

¹¹ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Men of the Bible* (Zondervan, 1958), p. 49.

¹² Interestingly, some argue that when the Evangelist declared that Andrew “first” found his brother, that he was implying that the Gospel writer, the apostle John, also went to get his brother, James, and brought him to Jesus. But it seems to be quite a strain to draw this conclusion based only on the use of the adverb “first.”

¹³ Klink, p. 148.

¹⁴ There is great pleasure and satisfaction in bringing a family member to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. After my own dad professed faith on his death bed in 1991, the Lord enabled me to bear witness to two of brothers who both profess today to be followers of Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (William B. Eerdmans, 1983), p. 57.

in a moment; literally, *looked upon* him or *looked him over* (Εμβλέψας).¹⁶ Jesus sized him up and then made this assertion regarding his future importance and impact upon others as His apostle.

Jesus having looked upon Andrew's brother, manifests his penetrating knowledge and ability to predict the future, by saying, "You are Simon, the son of John. You will be called Cephas" (in Aramaic) or Peter (in Greek), meaning Rock. However, this was not merely a prediction it was also a promise, indicating what God's grace would accomplish in the heart and life of his disciple.¹⁷

The reformed commentator, **Herman Ridderbos**, gave a good explanation of Jesus naming Peter on this occasion as it gives weight to the apostolic witness of Jesus:

The giving of the name involves not just as characterization of Simon as Peter, that is, as a rock of a man, a trustworthy person, but also his significance as a future disciple and apostle of Jesus, even though no further explication like that in Matthew 16:18 is given. For that reason it is proper to ask whether this first giving of the name is to be understood as a prediction. However this may be, the main thing is that here, at the very beginning of the Gospel, Peter is presented as the "rock-man." Thus the Evangelist unmistakably brings out for the church the reliability of the apostolic witness – a reliability attested by Jesus – the historic foundations of which are laid bare here.¹⁸

Of course the Roman Catholic Church elevated Peter, declaring that the Lord Jesus made him the first pope. **Matthew Poole**, a favorite commentator of Charles Spurgeon addressed this claim of Rome:

Thou art Simon; he (Jesus) knew him, and called him by name, and told him his father's name, *Jonas*, and giveth him a new name, *Cephas*, which is by interpretation doth not signify a head (as the popish disputant at Berne urged, to prove him the head of the church, as if it had been a Greek word, and came from κεφαλή (*kephalay*); or, as he pretended, ridiculously enough, from an old Greek word κεφας (*kephas*), but a *stone* (as our text tells us); by which name we find him called, 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal. 2:9; in other places *Peter*, which signifies a stone also, or a rock. Cephas is a Syriac (Aramaic) word, Peter a Greek word: Christ gave him the name. Both Cephas and Peter are by interpretation, a stone.¹⁹

Now in the Evangelist's account of these first two disciples of John who became disciples of Jesus on this day, only Andrew is identified by name. Who was the other disciple with Andrew? Granted, his anonymity resulted in no shortage of proposals. By far most believe that the unnamed disciple was John the Apostle, the one who wrote this Gospel.

Who the other of these two disciples was, we are not told. It is highly probable, as Chrysostom (A. D. 347–407) and Theophylact (11th c.?) conjecture, that it was St. John himself. On seven other occasions in this Gospel he humbly withholds his name (John 13:23; 19:26, 35; 20:2; 21:7, 20, 24). It is therefore very likely that he withheld it here.²⁰

This is certainly the most likely and plausible proposal. Why? John the Apostle never identified himself by name in his entire gospel account. When he referred to himself, it was "the one whom Jesus loved."

¹⁶ Hendriksen, p. 106.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 107.

¹⁸ Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John; A Theological Commentary* (William B. Eerdmans, 1997), p. 86.

¹⁹ Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, vol. 3 (Hendriksen, 2008), p. 283. I will always recall my good friend Doug Moore, who now is with the Lord. He always seemed to have a clever and humorous way of stating things. Knowing that Roman Catholicism believes that the pope should not be married, Doug spoke of Peter having a mother-in-law (Cf. Matt. 8:14). Doug said that this proves that "Peter could not have been the first pope, for any many that had a mother-in-law but no wife has not got the sense enough to be a pope."

²⁰ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John*, vol. 1 (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987, orig. 1869), p. 75.

John 13:23f. “Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom *one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved*.²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.”

John 20:2f. “Then she (Mary Magdalene) ran and came to Simon Peter, and to *the other disciple, whom Jesus loved*, and said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.’”

John 21:7. “Therefore *that disciple whom Jesus loved* said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.”

John 21:20. “Then Peter, turning around, saw *the disciple whom Jesus loved* following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays You?’”

But it could be reasoned by the detail of the account of John 1 itself that an eyewitness was present and recorded what he had seen and experienced. The account reads as one who was a firsthand hearer and an observer of these events. The stamp of John the Apostle is throughout our passage.

Some Concluding Words of Exhortation and Counsel

Let us first consider the kind manner in which our Lord met and encouraged these two disciples. He spent time with them, even inviting them to wherever it was that He was staying.

Consider first, *the small beginnings of the church which our Lord would form upon Himself*. Here in the first portion of this section (1:35-42) we read of the beginnings of the Christian Church. As far reaching as the Church has become, a kingdom that encompasses the world, there was a time when it was comprised of only three souls, here we read of Andrew, an unnamed disciple, and Peter, Andrew's brother. But the beginning of Jesus' disciples were only two, Andrew and an unidentified man, who were formerly disciples of John the Baptist. But see what glorious events can take place by the simple but continual witness to Jesus Christ! **J. C. Ryle** expressed the matter well:

We see, for one thing, in these verses, *what good is done by continually testifying of Jesus Christ*.

The first time that John the Baptist cried, “Behold the Lamb of God,” no result appears to have followed. We are not told of any who heard, inquired, and believed. But when he repeated the same words the next day, we read that two of His disciples “heard him speak, and followed Jesus.” They were received most graciously by Him they followed.²¹

Ryle went on to write,

This simple story is a pattern of the way in which good has been done to souls in every age of the Christian Church. By such testimony as that before us, and by none else, men and women are converted and saved. It is by exalting Christ, not the Church, -- Christ, not the sacraments, -- Christ, not the ministry; -- it is by this means that hearts are moved, and sinners are turned to God. To the world such testimony may seem weakness and foolishness. Yet, like the rams horns before whose blast the walls of Jericho fell down, this testimony is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. The story of the crucified Lamb of God has proved, in every age, the power of God unto salvation. Those who have done most for Christ's cause in every part of the world, have been like John the Baptist. They have not cried, “Behold

²¹ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John*, vol. 1 (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987, orig. 1869), pp. 69.

me”, or, “Behold the Church”, or, “Behold the ordinances”, but “Behold the Lamb.” If souls are to be saved, men must be pointed directly to Christ.²²

But secondly, *let us take to heart the great privilege we have and potential we have to further the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and to bring eternal blessing to others.* As soon as Andrew came to Jesus, he went to fetch his brother Simon in order to bring him to Jesus.

The fact before us is most striking and instructive. Out of the three first members of the Christian Church, one at least was brought to Jesus, by the private, quiet word of a relative. He seems to have heard no public preaching. He saw no mighty miracles wrought. He was not convinced by any powerful reasoning. He only heard his brother telling him that he had found a Savior himself, and at once the work began in his soul. The simple testimony of a warm-hearted brother was the first link in the chain by which Peter was drawn out of the world and joined to Christ. The first blow in that mighty work by which Peter was made a pillar of the Church, was struck by Andrew’s words: “We have found the Christ.”²³

Let us also *learn from Christ on how we might best deal with souls.* Let us consider the kind way in which our Savior invited and welcomed these men to come unto Him. He responded to their simple coming unto Him. People felt at ease and welcomed in the presence of the Savior.

We read that Jesus first inquired of them, “What do you seek?” They came and were ready to follow Him, but He initiated their conversation.

They came behind him; but, though he had his back towards them, he was soon aware of them, and *turned, and saw them following.* Note, Christ takes early cognizance of the first motions of a soul towards him, and the first step taken in the way to heaven; see Isaiah 64:5; Luke 15:20. He did not stay (wait) till they begged leave to speak with him, but spoke first. What communion there is between a soul and Christ, it is he that *begins the discourse.* He saith unto them, *What seek ye?* This was not a reprimand for their boldness in intruding into his company: he that came to *seek us* never checked any for *seeking* him; but, on the contrary, it is a kind invitation of them into his acquaintance whom he saw bashful and modest: “Come, what have you to say to me? What is your petition? What is your request.”²⁴

Our Lord set before us a wonderful pattern that we should mimic in *our own desire to be available and desirous to serve others in bringing them to Jesus Christ.*

Note, those whose business it is to instruct people in the affairs of their souls should be humble, and mild, and easy of access, and should encourage those that apply to them. The question Christ put to them is what we should all put to ourselves when we begin to follow Christ, and take upon us the profession of his holy religion: “*What seek ye? What do we design and desire?*” Those that *follow* Christ, and yet *seek* the world, or themselves, or the praise of men, deceive themselves. “*What seek we* in seeking Christ? Do we seek a teacher, ruler, and reconciler? In following Christ, do we seek the favour of God and eternal life?”²⁵

Consider the great ministry that commenced with the conversion of Peter, brought to Jesus Christ by his brother. We have no concept of what the Lord may do with our witness as we point others to our Savior.

²² Ibid, pp.69f.

²³ Ibid, p. 71.

²⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 5 (Fleming H. Revell Company, n. d., originally 1721), p. 864.

²⁵ Ibid.

Sometimes we hear good things, but most often we do not. But one day we will see the fruit that the Lord has wrought through our faithful pointing of others to Him.

Just by way of example, I received these brief encouraging notes this week from two pastors in Africa who receives these weekly sermon notes:

Dear Dr Larson,

Warm Christian greetings from Durban eThekweni RSA in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This serves to express my deepest gratitude for the sermons I receive since the Pastors Conference we had with you here in Durban since 2017. I'm so encouraged and inspired to learn the truths and promises of God that strengthen the doctrines studied in the Bible... Looking forward to a strong continued relationship with you and your church.

All the blessings,
Rev Eric Sifiso Jali
Inanda Baptist Churches
Durban, South Africa

And from Kenya (I think) I received this short note:

I am so deeply moved by your letter of Sunday sermon notes 6-3-2018. What books can you advise us to read on evidences of your church or ministry? We would greatly appreciate any guidance you can give us to learn more about your ministry. Sincerely yours, Pastor Oseko Onyoni

May the Lord help our church and may He bless us as we continually attempt to bring people to our Savior.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Rom. 15:13)
