

GOSPEL OF THE MESSIAH

Message 13

Text: John 1:35-51

Date: 5/18/2014

INTRO: We have covered 3 lines of evidence that Jesus Christ is truly the Messiah, the Son of God. As I thought about that, we could have given one more. In the section that dealt with the preparation of the Messiah for the world, the last point we considered was His baptism. And at Jesus baptism a voice came from heaven which said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." That could be given as a proof that Christ was truly the Messiah. The evidence that John saw when he baptized Christ is where John the Baptist came to know, *oida*, that Christ was truly the Messiah. However, I gave as the first proof the proof of His qualifications by bloodline. Christ's bloodline goes back to David, which it must if He will qualify. Then we saw that He qualified by His temptations. Last Sunday we saw that John the Baptist pointed to Christ and said, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." Well, that is none other than the long promised Messiah. You will remember that Messiah is the Hebrew word for our word 'Christ'.

We come now to the fourth line of proof that Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah. It is proof from His works and His words. His very life proved beyond anything else that He was truly the Son of God, the long promised Messiah! As I outline the Gospels, this day in which John said for the second time, "Behold the Lamb of God", we come to a transition in focus. The spotlight, which has been on John the Baptist, now turns from John to Jesus Christ and it will remain there for the rest of the biblical account. In John 3:30 John the Baptist said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." That is what began to happen on this day.

May I recommend that this holds true for pastors, all in position of Christian leadership, and every individual Christian. When we are born again, or when we enter any sphere of Christian ministry, we must decrease and the Lord must increase. If not, we will not do well. The more the Lord Jesus becomes the focus of our lives, the more we decrease and the more the Lord increases. The Lord wants to become our all in all.

Now, the focus in the account of the life of Christ thus far has been on John. That is rightly so. He was the forerunner of the Messiah. The priests and Levites have concentrated on John. They have heard of the baptism of repentance. Jesus is not yet in the picture. But this day He enters the picture. This day is a transition day, and the transition is from John to Jesus. And in my view, it is also the first day of Christ's ministry. When John pointed these two disciples to Jesus, they left him and started following Jesus. They will both become one of the famous 12 apostles, and here we have Jesus' first two disciples. So we have right here the great transition from John to Jesus, and Jesus Christ enters His ministry. The last proof that He is the Messiah will come from His words and His works. This will take us to about half way through the Gospels.

From these verses before us in the Gospel story and onward, we will go through two years of the life of One Man whose life impacted and changed the world as no other man did in an entire life-time. No true historian can ignore the impact of Jesus' few brief years of ministry. We are looking at the greatest story ever told, and the Man that impacted the world more than any other.

As I outline the Gospel story, the proof that Jesus is truly the Messiah is given in 59 points. Some points are longer and some shorter, but this morning we want to look briefly at the first point which I have called proof from His knowledge of men. We find this in verses 37-51. Here we have what I see as the first two days of His official ministry.

And so, this morning we want to look at the first of those 59 points. And then, to close, I want to share with you briefly some quotes about how Jesus' few years of ministry have impacted the world.

D. Proof of Messianic Right From His Works and Words

1. His knowledge of men (1:37-51)

In my studies I have concluded that Jesus is now fully 30 years old. When He was baptized 'he began to be about 30 years of age.' Almost 2 months have passed and He is now fully 30 years of age. As I see it, and I will explain it in another message, Jesus will now minister for two

years or just over two. I know you will have heard that it was three or three and one half years. I will show you in another message why I believe that is not correct.

And now, we are just entering the accounts of these two years of the life of Christ that changed the world and that can change your life and mine. So let us read verses 35-38 to make this transition from John to Jesus (read). When these two disciples heard John's declaration of Christ, something happens inside of them. They will never be the same. All who truly meet Him can never be the same if they follow Him. And in these two disciples of John, there is an inner urge to follow this One John has identified as the Lamb of God. And as Jesus turns to go, they both begin to follow Him. You see, Jesus ministry is officially beginning. Here, two of John's disciples are attracted to Jesus, and it is as a great inner urge causes them to follow Him. And Jesus is not oblivious to what is happening. His life work has begun. He is now fully 30 years old, the time when the OT priests began their ministry.

Jesus, perceiving that something significant has happened to these two, turns and says to them, "What are you looking for?" They said, "Rabbi, where are You staying?" Now we must note that here is a carpenter's son, uneducated, and they call Him Rabbi. That is like calling Him Doctor in our language. "Doctor, where are You staying." Why do they ask that? Because they want to go there. They want to ask Him some questions. They have some big things to settle, life-changing things.

So look at verse 39 (read). Now it says it was about the 10th hour. In Roman time it would be 10:00 a.m. However, I would take that to be Jewish time, and so it would be 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Now just who were these two disciples of John that followed Jesus? Well, look at verse 40 (read). Andrew was of Bethsaida. Like his brother

Peter, he was a fisherman, and lived at Capernaum. Both towns are on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. The last time we hear of him in Scripture is in Acts 1:13. He was gathered with those 120 when the Holy Spirit came on them and the Church was born in Acts 2. We do not hear of him again in Scripture but history says he died on an X shaped cross in Achaia, and that cross is now known as 'St. Andrew's Cross'. Most of the apostles were martyred. Today, because of easy believism and a lack of standing on truth, many of us in free lands do not suffer persecution. Yet Scripture tells us that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. I am convinced that the greatest persecution in free lands comes those who call themselves Christians, and it comes to those who stand on truth and Scripture.

Now, since the writer identifies one of these two disciples, we wonder why he did not identify the other one. The reason is most likely because that other disciple is none other than the writer of this Gospel. His name then is John. We can come to that conclusion because John does not refer to himself in this book. He always refers to himself in some other way. So I think we can safely conclude that because the writer does not identify this second disciple, it is none other than John. So the first two disciples were Andrew and John. We have spoken of the writer, John, in an earlier message. Though these followers may not yet have become official disciples, they later will.

So let us go to verses 41-42 (read). Now, as I see it, here is Christ's first day of ministry. And here we are introduced to a third disciple of Christ. These disciples are not yet what we call 'apostles', that is sent ones; but they are followers or disciples, which means learners. They will later give up their jobs and follow Christ and learn from him.

And no doubt, before this first evening together is over, these disciples have asked Jesus many questions and have come to this very solid

conclusion: Jesus Christ, the carpenter's Son is the Messiah!

Now look at verses 40-42 (read). I understand that Cephas is a Syriac word and in the Greek language it is Petros. In English we have it as Peter. In verse 42 we are told that this name means, 'a stone'. Jesus has made some very important contacts this first day of His ministry. His ministry is now well under way.

From verses 43-51 we have the second day of Christ's ministry. Note once more that we have a specific day mentioned in verse 43. It is the day following the one mentioned in verse 35. Some day I will show you the significance of all these time markers by John. But this day Jesus has in mind to go to Galilee. That was not too far to the north of where He now is. But before He left, He sought out Philip and said, "Follow Me." Andrew and John chose to follow Jesus, but with Philip, it seems; Jesus had to call Him. It may be what Jesus is saying is, "I want you to change occupations, Philip. I want you to follow Me." You see, Jesus is now actively recruiting disciples.

The name *Philip* means lover of horses. Scholars think that like John and Andrew, he was first a disciple of John. And like Andrew and Peter, he was from Bethsaida. I find it amazing that so many of Jesus' disciples came from Galilee of the Gentiles, and not from religious Jerusalem. And the spiritual interest of these men is indicated by their interest in the ministry of John the Baptist.

And no doubt, as they now go on foot to Galilee, Philip and Jesus and the other disciples talk and Philip is convinced that Jesus is the Messiah. However, Philip was not a very strong believer as the Gospels bear out. But none the less, Jesus called him to be one of His disciples. John MacArthur has written a book on these disciples called 'Twelve Ordinary Men.' You see, all the Lord needs to conquer the world is ordinary men.

We are not told exactly where Jesus went when He went to Galilee, but I suppose He went to Capernaum, where He will usually go from this time forward. They would have arrived at Capernaum sooner than Bethsaida. But, note the very first thing Philip does when they arrive where they are going in verses 45-46 (Read). We could learn a lesson from Philip, that when we find Jesus to be the Messiah, the very first thing on our hearts should be to bring others to Him as well. By the way, according to tradition, though Philip had trouble with unbelief and was somewhat of a weak character, he died a martyr's death; a witness's death. Witnessing to others, I think, is one of the first signs of true conversion.

And so, through Philip we now meet Nathaniel. Nathaniel is a name as Hebrew as they get. It means *God gave*. It is held by many scholars that Nathaniel is also known as Bartholomew. The name Bartholomew simply means Son of Tolmai. Nathaniel is from Cana (John 21:2). It seems Nathaniel has a bit of a chip on his shoulders about Nazareth. He says, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" But when Jesus saw Nathaniel coming towards Him He said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." So look at verse 47 (read). He is subtly saying, "Can anyone good be a Jew?" But He puts it in the positive. Remember I gave the point we are in as proof that Jesus is the Messiah from His knowledge of men. We see that as He handpicks disciples. The disciples we have so far in these first two days of ministry are Andrew, John, Peter, Philip and Nathanael.

Well, I have given this point as proof that Jesus is the Messiah from His knowledge of men. And when Jesus looked at Nathanael and said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile", Nathaniel is shocked. Look at verses 48-49 (read). In shock Nathanael said to Jesus, "How do you know me?" And when Jesus told him how it was that He knew him, the very next time Nathaniel spoke to this Man from that town he had so little use for, Nazareth, he called him Rabbi. From snickering to calling Jesus Rabbi, or Doctor;

what a change has come over him. And note these incredible words of recognition in verse 49, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!

You see, we find in this passage that Jesus is no ordinary person when it comes to seeing into the hearts of men. When LEM was an old man and his eyes had grown dim, a student came before him and said, "Mr. Maxwell, can you see me?" And Maxwell said, " Young man, I can see clear through you." Jesus could see clear through Nathaniel, and surprise, surprise; a rare commodity stands before Him, a Jew in whom there is no guile.

Well, let us read verses 50-51. Jesus is saying, "Nathanael, you haven't seen anything yet." And I say to us, "We haven't seen anything yet. We will see greater, much greater."

With regard to verse 51, let me say that there are a good many things in the Gospels that are yet beyond me. The teaching of verse 51 is one of those. The Jamieson, Faucette and Brown commentary says, "The key to this great saying is Jacob's vision ([#Ge 28:12-22](#)), to which the allusion plainly is. To show the patriarch that though alone and friendless on earth his interests were busying all heaven, he was made to see "heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon a" mystic "ladder reaching from heaven to earth." "By and by," says Jesus here, "ye shall see this communication between heaven and earth thrown wide open, and the *Son of man the real Ladder of this intercourse.*"

CONCL: Well, I want to give you a rather lengthy conclusion. We have now entered the ministry of Jesus Christ as given in the NT. We have looked at the first two days of His ministry, and already we have five followers who are convinced that Jesus is the Christ; Andrew, John, Peter, Philip and Nathanael. All five of these will later become official apostles.

So very humbly begins the ministry of Christ, a ministry that will impact the world like none other ever has. I

wonder how insignificant you think you are. With just such insignificant people, the Lord can conquer the world. Here was Jesus, in Galilee of the Gentiles. To the religious Jews of the day, this was a most unlikely place to call disciples from. And here He chose, in the words of John MacArthur, twelve ordinary men. And with these ordinary men He will accomplish extraordinary things.

Now I want to share with you just briefly what kind of an impact the few brief years of the life of Christ have had on the world. I checked this out on internet and found some interesting articles. I took a few of the following from an internet site called, "why-jesus.com/history.htm". We will begin from shortly after Christ ascended to heaven and progress to quotes from our day. The site, "why-jesus.com" first quoted from Josephus Flavius. He was a Jewish historian from whom I have quoted to you numerous times. He was born in 34 AD, just after Christ ascended to heaven. He has written like this: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first, did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day", end quote.

Pontius Pilate, with whom we are familiar from the Gospels apparently wrote to the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar like this: "And him (Christ), Herod, and Archelaus and Philip, Annas, and Caiphas, with all the people, delivered to me, making a great uproar against me that I should try Him. I, therefore, ordered Him to be crucified, having first scourged Him, and having found against Him no cause of evil accusations or deeds. At the time he was crucified, there was darkness over all the world, the sun being darkened at midday, and the stars appearing, but in them there appeared no luster; and the moon, as if turned into blood, failed in her light."

This article further says that Julian the Apostate, who was the Roman Emperor from 361-363, has said, "One of the most gifted ancient adversaries to Christianity said: 'Jesus...has

now been celebrated about three hundred years having done nothing in his lifetime worthy of fame, unless anyone thinks it is a very great work to heal lame and blind people and exorcise demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany.'"

But at the end of his life was forced to say:

"Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!"

Napoleon Bonaparte, the emperor of the French said: "You speak of Caesar, of Alexander, of their conquests and of the enthusiasm which they enkindled in the hearts of their soldiers; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests, with an army faithful and entirely devoted to his memory? My armies have forgotten me even while living, as the Carthaginian army forgot Hannibal. Such is our power."

"I know men and I tell you, Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour, millions would die for him."

"I search in vain history to find similar to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the gospel. Neither history nor humanity, nor ages, nor nature, offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or to explain it. Here everything is extraordinary."

Ernest Renan, French historian, and religious scholar and linguist said, "All history is incomprehensible without Christ. Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed" end of quote.

H. G. Wells, a British writer who lived from 1866-1946 who was asked which person left the most permanent impression on history, he said these words regarding judging a person's greatness by historical standards: "By this test, Jesus stands first." And again, "I am a historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history." And again, "Christ is the most

unique person of history. No man can write a history of the human race without giving first and foremost place to the penniless teacher of Nazareth."

Kenneth Scott Latourette, former President of American Historic Society writing of Jesus in a book called, "A History of Christianity", says: "It is evidence of His importance, of the effect that He has had upon history and presumably, of the baffling mystery of His being that no other life ever lived on this planet has evoked so huge a volume of literature among so many people and languages, and that, far from ebbing, the flood continues to mount."

"As the centuries pass by, the evidence is accumulating that measured by its effect on history, Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet. The influence appears to be mounting."

"No other life lived on this planet has so widely and deeply affected mankind."

George Bancroft, the great American historian said, "I find the name of Jesus Christ written on the top of every page of modern history."

Another writer said that the historian Philip Schaff described the overwhelming influence which Jesus had on subsequent history and culture of the world. He said, "This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science...he shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, he spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, he set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times."

Another article said, "The power of Christ knows no boundary of time or space. In our own age, many skeptics have been convinced just as thoroughly as their first-century counterparts." For example, Lew Wallace, a famous general and literary genius, was a known atheist. For two years, Wallace studied in the leading libraries of Europe and America, seeking information that would forever destroy

Christianity. While writing the second chapter of a book outlining his arguments, he suddenly found himself on his knees crying out to Jesus, 'My Lord and my God.'"

"When confronted by solid indisputable evidence, he could no longer deny that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Later, Lew Wallace wrote the book *Ben Hur*, one of the greatest English novels ever written concerning the time of Christ", end quote. The book, 'Ben Hur', was published in 1880. Wikipedia says that 'Ben Hur' is, and I quote, "Considered the most influential Christian book of the nineteenth century", it was the best-selling American novel from the time of its publication, superseding [Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*](#) (1852). It remained at the top until the publication of [Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*](#) (1936)" end quote.

A while ago, in listening to Ravi Zacharias I was alerted to a quote from W.E.H Lecky. I looked this quote up on the internet and found it in a book written by Bruce Bickel and Stan Jants called *100 Prophecies*. Here is what they write: "It is undeniable and indisputable. Jesus was the most extraordinary life the world has known. Even atheists and those who are cynical of any spiritual nature in Christ and humanity readily acknowledge the overwhelming impact Jesus has made on our civilization. The famous historian - and self professed skeptic - W.E.H. Lecky conceded the importance of the life of Jesus Christ with this statement..." The book then gives the quote by Lecky. But before I give the quote, I want you to know that this man W.E.H. Lecky was a famous historian. And he was a skeptic. He was not a believer but here is what he says:

"The character of Jesus has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the longest incentive in its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence, that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists", end quote. That is an incredible piece of information from a skeptic.

According to this man, who is a skeptic, the influence of Jesus Christ has exerted a greater influence on good living than all the writings of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. That is a huge statement! But

Lecky goes on like this: "But just as His impact cannot be denied, we can't ignore the controversy He has generated. No individual has caused more debate than Jesus Christ. For such a central figure in history, there is little consensus about Him. Jesus has split public opinion about Himself into two divergent camps. It seems that either He is respected and revered, or He is despised and denigrated." You may understand that that paragraph is a great encouragement to me."

And for a last quote, one article said this: "Nearly two thousand years ago in an obscure village, a child was born of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village where He worked as a carpenter until He was thirty. Then for three years He became an itinerant preacher.

"This man never went to college or seminary. He never wrote a book. He never held a public office. He never had a family nor owned a home. He never put His foot inside a big city nor traveled even 200 miles from His birthplace. And though He never did any of the things that usually accompany greatness, throngs of people followed Him. He had no credentials but Himself.

"While He was still young, the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His followers ran away. He was turned over to His enemies and sentenced to death on a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth - the simple coat He had worn. His body was laid in a borrowed grave provided by a compassionate friend.

"But three days later this Man arose from the dead - living proof that He was, as He had claimed, the Savior whom God had sent, the Incarnate Son of God.

"Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today the risen Lord Jesus Christ is the central figure of the human race. On our calendars His birth divides history into two eras. One day of every week is set aside in remembrance of Him. And our two most important holidays celebrate His birth and resurrection. On church steeples around the world, His cross has become the symbol of victory over sin and death.

"This one Man's life has furnished the theme for more songs, books, poems and paintings than any other person or

event in history. Thousands of colleges, hospitals, orphanages and other institutions have been founded in honor of this One who gave His life for us.

"All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the governments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned have not changed the course of history as much as this One Solitary Life."