

Real freedom is the deep-seated confidence that God really will provide everything we need. The person who believes this is the freest of all persons on earth, because no matter what situation he finds himself in, he has nothing to fear.
—Jon Bloom

The Baptist Catechism
AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813
(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the
Riverside Baptist Church)

23. Q. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (Eph. 1:4, 5), did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom. 3:20-22; Gal. 3:21, 22).

24. Q. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5, 6); who, being the eternal Son of God, became man (John 1:14; Gal. 4:4), and so was and continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever (Rom. 9:5; Lk. 1:35; Col. 2:9; Heb. 7:24, 25).

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

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WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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NATHANAEL

Nathanael saith unto him, 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. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. (John 1:48-50).

Nathanael, by that name, appears only six times in the New Testament. Five of those occurrences appear here in the context of the call of Christ to him. He was one of those who accompanied Peter when they met the risen Lord on the shores of Gallilee (John 21:2). Some think that he may be the same that was called Bartholomew in other listings of the apostles. But the confession of this man is significant and for that reason he is worthy of greater study. He is featured here in only six verses, but the revelation given to him is profound both then and now.

Of course, to put all into proper context, we would be reminded that this sequence of events began with the direction given them by John the Baptist – “Behold the Lamb of God.” Two of the disciples followed Jesus, one of them being Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. His announcement to Peter was that they had found the Messiah. Fast forward to the next day and Jesus went into Galilee and there found Philip and commanded him, “Follow me.” Even as Andrew had sought out Peter, Philip found Nathanael.

We cannot help but notice a pattern here. Andrew, being convinced that Jesus was the Christ, found Peter and brought him to Christ. Jesus calls Philip who then finds Nathanael and brings him to Jesus. Should not we who know the Lord be so inclined to find others and bring

them to Christ. One of my uncles used the approach with another saying, “I want to introduce you to the King!”

The focus of Jesus at this point turns to this one of His lambs. Having been identified by Philip as being the same one of whom Moses and the prophets had written. It was the further identification of Him as being “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” that gave Nathanael pause. (v. 45). His reply was “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Without casting any aspersions upon the report of Philip, he revealed himself as a student of the Word of God. He would have no doubt related to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, but he accurately observed that there was no reference to Nazareth. But Philip persisted and simply said, “Come and see.” (v. 46).

We could assume much as to the character of Nathanael. He was the friend of Philip who was obviously of devout character and a devotee to the Word of God. His response had been one of immediate recognition. Nathanael would require something more and the Lord would provide it. And so, Jesus reveals to the young man that He already knows him. Our Lord’s observation of him is that much like Job, he was a man of integrity. The Lord revealed His assessment of him in saying, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” That is, not one given to deceit or hypocrisy, one honest

regarding his thoughts and expressions. He was not guiltless. He had been quick to express his thoughts at hearing the report of Philip. Nathanael was taken aback at our Lord's comment. And he quickly responded with a question as to how or when did Jesus know him. The answer Jesus gave him had a profound effect on him and elicited the response that all should be able to give at learning who Jesus is. While the others had recognized Jesus as the Messiah, Nathanael's reaction seems to have been given with a greater depth of understanding.

Jesus told him that He had seen him even before Philip had called him. Specifically, He had seen him when he was under the fig tree. What must have amazed Nathanael was the fact that Jesus saw Him. He had attracted the attention of Jesus with a special interest. It may be a matter of speculation that he was there meditating on the Word or praying. *But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. (Micah 4:4).* It seemed that the fig trees provide a place for such serious thought. But it would appear that Nathanael sensed more than a visual sighting here. Perhaps it was that the Lord had witnessed the very thoughts of his heart in such a way as to leave him completely open to the eyes of the Lord being in every place beholding the evil and the good. He may have sensed, as did David, "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me." Whatever he sensed in the Lord's observation of him brought forth a powerful confession of faith. He recognized the deity of Christ, the Son of

God, and he recognized the royalty of Christ as the King of Israel. We may safely assume that, like that later given to Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal these things to him. As wonderful as this discovery must have been to Nathanael, there were greater things yet to be revealed.

Not only would it be that greater things were in store for Nathanael, but it would also be to all who come to know the Lord and who become the beneficiaries of a continual outpouring of blessings through Christ. Being a student of the Word, Nathanael would not have missed the reference to Jacob's Old Testament experience. Jacob had experienced the Lord coming to him in the wilderness, reaching to where he was, and extending to Heaven. He saw there at a time of utter helplessness, the angels of the Lord ascending and descending. *And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. (John 1:51).* We are reminded of the declaration that, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Hebrews 1:14).*

It is through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God that all things of blessedness are brought to His people. The true disciples of Christ have a message and it always points to Christ. It is "Behold the Lamb of God" and all that pertains to Him and the will of God having been accomplished. Christ was the focus of John, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael, and each of them were drawn to Him. The Apostles once asked, "To whom shall we go?" We might be asked, to whom shall you take them? *bhs*

SIN'S WEIGHT UNFELT

A rather flippant sort of scoffing young man asked a preacher in a mocking fashion, "You say that unsaved people carry a great weight of sin. Frankly," he said, "I feel nothing. How heavy is sin? Ten pounds? Fifty pounds? Eighty pounds? A hundred pounds?"

The preacher thought for a moment and gently replied, “If you laid a 400-pound weight on a corpse, would it feel the load?”

The young man was quick to say, “Of course not, it’s dead.”

To which the preacher replied in driving home the point, “The man who does not know Christ is equally dead. And though his load of sin is great, he feels none of it.”
– Anon (Cited by Daniel Parks).

What a wonder it is that the great Deliverer delivered Himself up; the divinely appointed Judge was arrested as a common criminal; the great Liberator was bound; the great Leader was led away! Let us praise Gethsemane’s Christ, the King of kings and the Lamb of God, and resolve to trust Him more fully, follow Him more obediently, and look the more expectantly for His return to take us to Himself. Let us take with us five practical ways in which Christ, as Gethsemane’s King and Lamb, should impact not only our faith and life, but particularly our dying and death: • Let us submit to the trials He imposes on us in our dying without complaint—indeed, with cheerfulness and thanksgiving—so that we may drink the cup He places in our hands rather than to plead for another. • Let us learn to know when silence in our dying process is a more powerful testimony in the presence of evil and unbelief than any words we might say. • Like Paul, let us cherish the privilege of being admitted to the fellowship of His sufferings through our dying and death. • Let us honor His giving up of Himself for us with more complete surrender of ourselves to Him, so that we would be His willing servant, now and forever, in all of our daily dying. • Let us respond to Christ’s dying devotion in Gethsemane by devotedly bowing before Him, asking for grace to be willing to die in, for, with, and unto Him who was willing to die for us so that we might live forever.

--Beeke and Bogosh, *Dying and Death*

DELIVERANCE through trust

YEARS ago, the Mentonese desired to break away from the dominion of the Prince of Monaco. They therefore drove out his agent. The Prince came with his army, not a very great one, it is true, but still formidable to the Mentonese. I know not what the high and mighty princeling was not going to do; but the news came that the King of Sardinia was coming up in the rear to help the Mentonese, and therefore his lordship of Monaco very prudently retired to his own rock. When a believer stands out against evil he may be sure that the Lord of hosts will not be far away. The enemy shall hear the dash of His horse-hoof and the blast of His trumpet, and shall flee before Him. Wherefore be of good courage, and compel the world to say of you, “He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver him.”

--C. H. Spurgeon, *Barbed Arrows*