

28.15 Jesus Chooses John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (John 1:29–51)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.

Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *disciple*: a follower of someone who teaches. In Bible times being a disciple meant that one lived with, ate with, and spent one's life with the teacher, seeing everything and learning everything one could from the teacher.
- *Messiah/Christ*: the One promised in the Old Testament who would come to save His people
- *rabbi*: a teaching master
- *lamb*: “Among the Jews, . . . a lamb was offered . . . in the temple, every morning and evening, as a part of the daily worship, #Ex 29:38,39. The Messiah was predicted as a lamb led to the slaughter, to show his patience in his sufferings, and readiness to die for man, #Isa 53:7. A lamb, among the Jews, was also an emblem of patience, meekness, gentleness. On *all* these accounts, rather than on any one of them alone, Jesus was called the Lamb. He was innocent (#1Pe 2:23-25); he was a sacrifice for sin—the substance represented by the daily offering of the lamb, and slain at the usual time of the evening sacrifice (#Lu 23:44-46); and he was what was represented by the Passover, turning away the anger of God, and saving sinners by his blood from vengeance and eternal death, #1Co 5:7.” —Online Bible

Scripture: John 1:29–51 (ESV)

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ 31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” 32 And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” 39 He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” 46 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” 48 Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” 49 Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You

are the King of Israel!” 50 Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” 51 And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Introduction/Review:

Jesus had been baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist. What had happened that involved the three persons of the Trinity at the time of Jesus’ baptism? [The Spirit descended like a dove; the Father spoke from heaven; the Son was acknowledged as God’s beloved Son.] God had told John to watch for this very sign: the One upon whom the Spirit would rest would be the Christ. John had witnessed the sign; he knew Jesus was the Son of God.

When you start school each year, one of your first questions is, “Who is my teacher?”

Men in our story today found their Teacher another way. The Teacher Himself either said, “Follow me,” or they saw He was such a superior Teacher that they asked to be His students. In either case, the Teacher chose them.

Story:

“Behold the Lamb of God”

The next day (teachers dispute whether this *next day* was before or after Jesus’ temptation; we will say it is ✓the day after His baptism) Jesus again walked near the place where John was baptizing. John, seeing Him, declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

What is John saying about the Lamb? What did we say the Jews thought about lambs? [Lambs were sacrificed, dying in place of a person.] What did John say this particular *Lamb of God*, Jesus, would do? [Take away the sin of the world.] ✓John knew that both Israelites and non-Israelites would be saved from their sin because of this Lamb. What a statement he was making by saying, “The sins of the world”!

John continued his speech: “I said that He is better than I am because he was before me.” What did this statement mean? [Jesus is better than John because He was God, living before John though born six months after him.]

John then stated, “I came baptizing with water in order to reveal Him to Israel.” John’s purpose for baptizing was to show the Jews who Jesus was. Remember what the angel had told John’s father? “He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God . . . to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.” John was doing his job of preparing the way for Jesus’ ministry.

First three disciples—John, Andrew, and Peter

Another day came. Again, Jesus walked by as John was talking to two of his own disciples. What is a disciple? [A person who follows a teacher. John was the teacher in this case.] Seeing Jesus, John again proclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God.” John’s two disciples left him to become disciples of Jesus. That was okay with John, for his purpose was to turn people to Jesus.

✓One of those disciples we are pretty sure was John, not the Baptist, but the brother of a man named James, who also became a disciple. The reason for any doubt is that the name John is not mentioned in today’s Scripture. However, John wrote the Gospel of John and doesn’t name himself in that Gospel of John. He might say “the disciple whom Christ loved” but not “John.”

John the Baptist’s other disciple is named. He was Andrew.

These two men asked Jesus where He was staying because it was about 4:00 p.m. They stayed with him that day.

Now, Andrew, certain that he had found the Messiah, didn’t keep this news to himself. He found his brother, Simon, and brought him to Jesus. When Jesus saw Simon, He told him his name and his father’s name and

said He would call him *Peter*. That's what we'll call him from now on—Peter, which means “a stone.” (“It was a proof of Christ’s omniscience that upon the first sight, without any enquiry, he could tell the name both of him and of his father. *The Lord knows them that are his*, and their whole case (Matthew Henry in Online Bible).

Two more disciples—Philip and Nathanael

The next day (✓two days after Jesus’ baptism) Jesus decided to go to Galilee. [Locate on map.] When He got there, he found a man named Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” Philip was from the same city in Galilee as Andrew and Peter. Philip did follow Jesus, and he couldn’t keep silent about finding the Messiah either. He found his friend, Nathanael, and said to him, “I have found the one prophesied in the Old Testament. His name is Jesus from the city called Nazareth; He’s the son of Joseph.”

Nathanael answered, [sarcastically] “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Apparently, Nazareth did not have a good reputation.

Philip said, “Well, come and see for yourself.”

Now, when Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said, “Look, you are an honest Israelite!”

✓Surprised, Nathanael sputtered, “How do you know me?”

Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, I saw you when you were under the fig tree.”

How could Jesus know he had been under a fig tree? How could he know Nathanael was a honest man before he even met him? Nathanael understood there was only one way this could be. “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” he said.

Jesus answered him, “Do you believe because I said I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these. You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on Me.”

Thus, we have the first five disciples of Jesus, ✓maybe six if John found his brother, James, also. What did they think of Jesus? Was He just an ordinary man? What did He do and say to show He was at least extraordinary if not other-worldly? [He knew them well before He met them; John the Baptist had said he was the Lamb of God, knowing this because He fulfilled God’s sign of the Holy Spirit.]

The disciples may not yet have realized Jesus is God, but they saw Him to be at least the Messiah/Christ prophesied in the Old Testament.

Lessons from this lesson:

- Jesus is God: He knew and saw Peter and Nathanael before He met them; John the Baptist declared He would take away the sins of the world.
- Be like Nathanael—honest.
- Know the Word like these disciples so that you may recognize truth and learn all that Jesus Christ is.
- Note on Nathanael: “Nathanael is commonly identified with Bartholomew for the following reasons: 1. The name Bartholomew is only a patronymic, and hence its bearer would be likely to have an additional name. (Compare #Mt 16:17 Ac 4:36.) 2. John never mentions Bartholomew, and the Synoptists never mention Nathanael, though John mentions him among apostles at the beginning and at the close of Christ’s ministry” (4fold gospel in Online Bible).

Activities:

- Play dough: tree, fig leaf, lamb
- Read through the “Jesus Is God” statements. (See “Jesus Is God visual” document.)
- Play “Disciple Tag.” Choose one student to be a “disciple.” Have the other children scatter around the

room or field. When the disciple tags someone, that person will become a disciple, too. Then both disciples will try to tag the other children. Continue until all the children have become disciples (Copied from unknown source).

- Review questions: (Game: Print, back with flannel or flock scraps, and cut out the fig leaves found below. A correct answer allows a student to place a fig leaf on the flannel board.)
 1. Fill in the blanks. John the Baptizer said, “Behold, the _____ of God that takes away the _____ of the _____.” [Lamb; sins; world.]
 2. How could Jesus rank before John? [He was before John.]
 3. How was Jesus before John? [He lived in heaven before John was born.]
 4. What sign had God told John would verify that the Son of God had come? [He would be the one on whom the Spirit would descend and remain.]
 5. One of the first disciples of Jesus was Andrew. He found brother and brought him to Jesus. What was the name of Andrew’s brother? [Simon Peter.]
 6. In Galilee Jesus called Philip to be His disciple. Whom did Philip tell about Jesus? [Nathanael.]
 7. Tell one way in which Jesus’ encounter with Nathanael shows Jesus is God. [He knew Nathanael was honest; He said He saw Nathanael under the fig tree before Philip called him.]
 8. What did Nathanael say to Jesus? [“Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”]
 9. Jesus said Nathanael would see greater things than Jesus’ knowing him. What did Jesus say he would see? [Heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- John 1:29—“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (See visual below.)
- John 1:1-14:
 - 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - 2 He was in the beginning with God.
 - 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
 - 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
 - 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
 - 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.
 - 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
 - 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.
 - 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
 - 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
 - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
 - 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

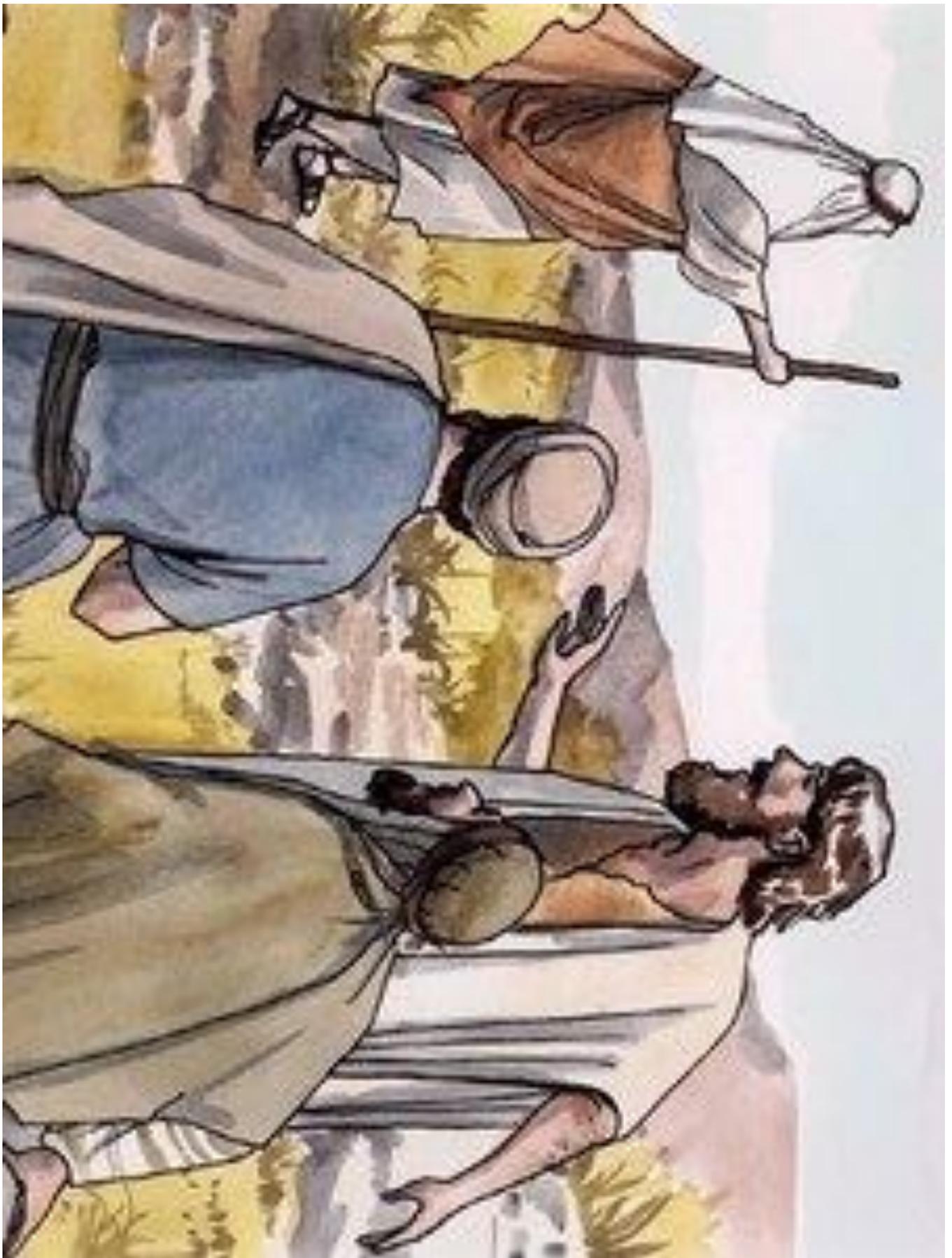
Handwork: (from a 1965 Gospel Light VBS Primary student book, *New Testament People*, altered instructions.) Have pupil cut figures of Philip, Peter, and Nathanael from the bottom of the page. Advanced pupils may put a gummed reinforcement at the waist of these men and attach 1/2 of a folded reinforcement to the back of the men. Put a 8"-long string through the reinforcements. Attach ends of string with tape to the X's. Bring Peter to the two disciples and to Jesus. Bring Philip. Then have Philip get Nathanael, moving the figures back and forth along the string

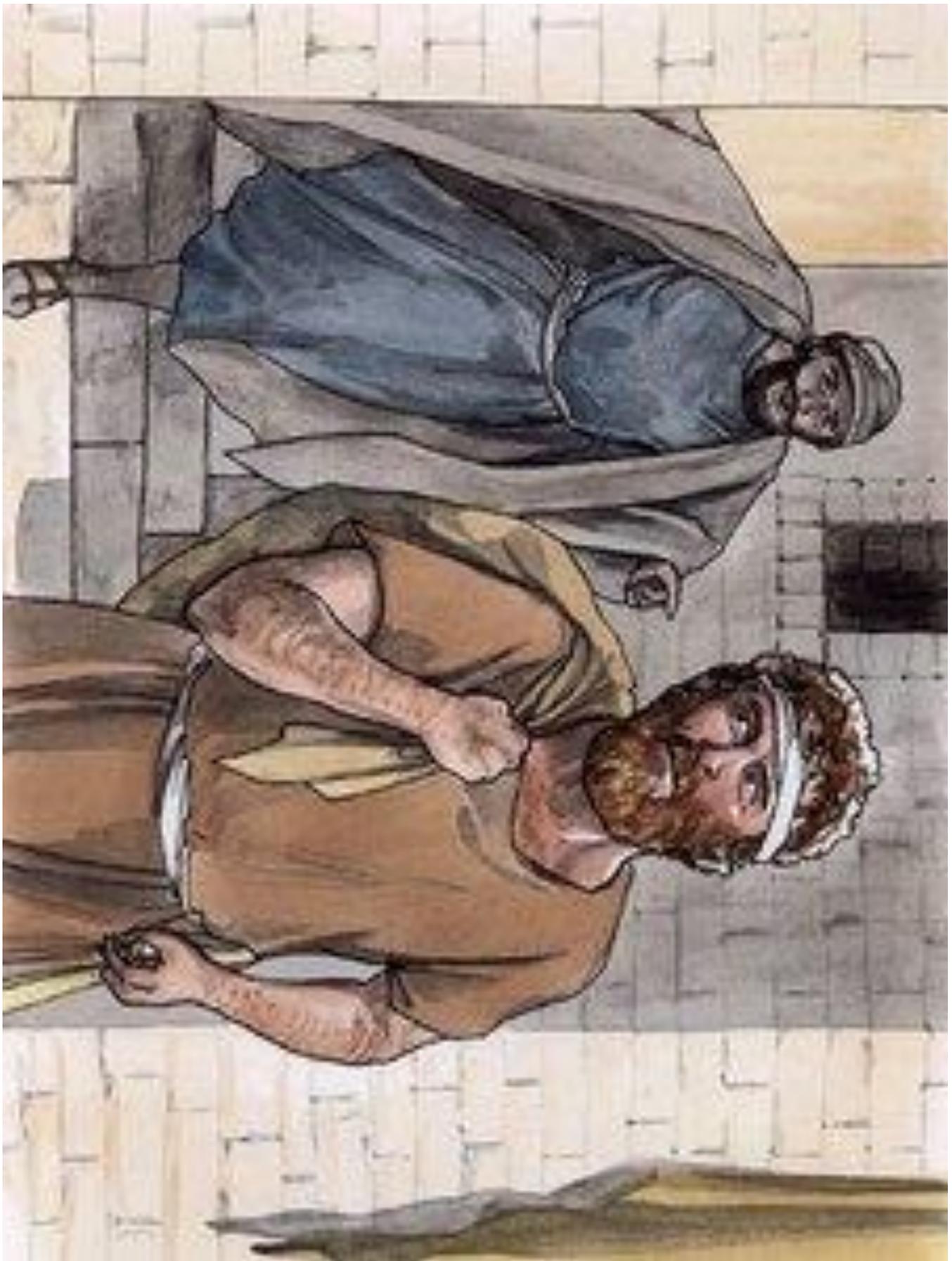
disciple:

Messiah/Christ:

rabbi:

lamb:





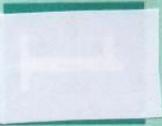








Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a child's name or a message, written in the top right corner of the page.



Philip Learns About Jesus

JOHN 1:43-50; LUKE 6:12-16

Jesus said to Philip, "Follow me." Then Philip hurried to tell his friend, Nathanael.

"We have found the Saviour!" Philip said. "Come and meet Jesus."

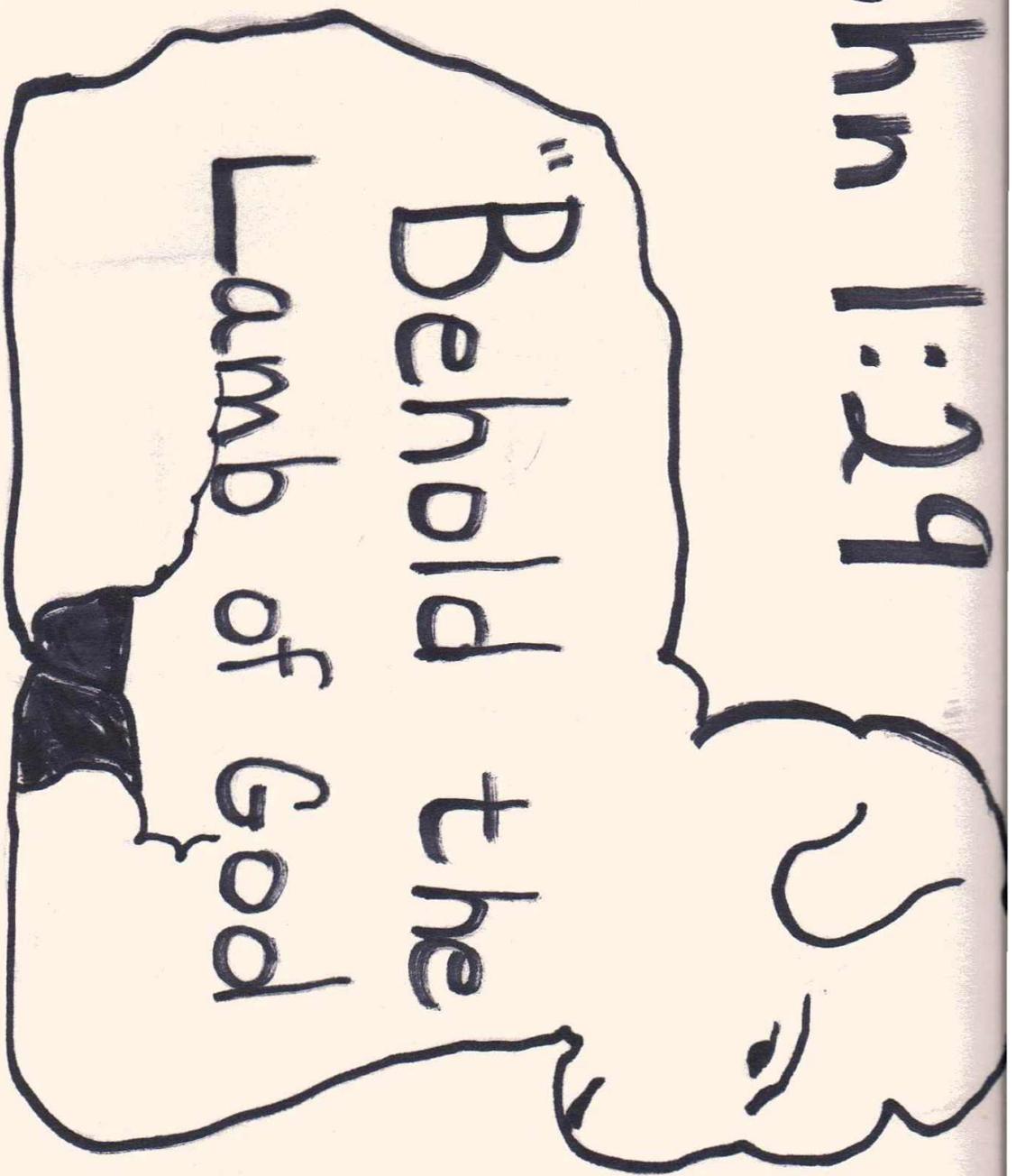
Philip went with Jesus and saw him help people in many ways. Philip learned that Jesus can do everything.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3



1965 Gospel Light VBS Primary student book, *New Testament People*

John 1:29



"Behold the
Lamb of God

Which taketh



away

the sin



of the
world."



