

## NATHANAEL — PROMISES OF THINGS YET UNSEEN

John 1:43-51

**(John 1:43-51)**, “The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. {44} Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. {45} Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. {46} And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. {47} Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! {48} 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. {49} Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. **{50}** 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. **{51}** 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.”



### BY WAY OF REVIEW:

- 1) **NATHANAEL WAS FROM THE CITY OF CANA** (John 21:2). Cana was **located** about 10 miles from the city of Nazareth where Jesus grew up. Cana was the city where Jesus performed His **first miracle** (John 2).
- 2) **NATHANAEL WAS ONE OF THE 12 DISCIPLES** (John 21:2). He is believed to be **THE SAME PERSON AS THE DISCIPLE NAMED BARTHOLOMEW**. In the lists of **THE 12 DISCIPLES**, when Bartholomew is mentioned, Nathanael is not mentioned. It is logical to conclude they were the same person. **NATHANAEL'S FULL NAME** might have been **NATHANAEL BARTHOLOMEW**. **THE LAST NAME, BARTHOLOMEW**, is a compound word, **“BAR”** and **“TOLMAL.”** **“BAR”** MEANS **“SON OF.”** **BARTHOLOMEW** means **“SON OF TOLMAL.”** **PETER** was called **“SIMON BAR JONAH,”** meaning **“Simon, the SON OF Jonah.”**
- 3) **PHILIP INTRODUCED NATHANAEL** to Jesus using the following words: **(V. 45)**, “. . . WE HAVE **FOUND HIM**, of whom **Moses** in the **law**, and **the prophets**, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
  - S It was not necessary to explain the significance of those words. Nathanael understood the **PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE** of such a statement. Philip was telling Nathanael the **MESSIAH HAD COME**.
  - S **PHILIP WAS SO SPECIFIC THAT HE GAVE THE MESSIAH'S ADDRESS:**
    - His **NAME** is **“JESUS”** (means “Jehovah is salvation)
    - He **LIVES** in **“NAZARETH”**
    - His **FATHER'S NAME** is **“JOSEPH”**
- 4) **NATHANAEL BALKED** at the fact that Jesus was **FROM NAZARETH**. **(V. 46)**, “. . . Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? . . .”
  - S **NATHANAEL'S NEGATIVE ATTITUDE** may have come from the fact that **NAZARETH WAS VERY SMALL** at that time in history. Perhaps **NAZARETH'S SIZE** caused Nathanael to consider it too insignificant for the Messiah to live there. Perhaps Nathanael's

attitude was spawned by **NAZARETH'S LOCATION** just **10 MILES** from his hometown of **CANA**. Nathanael may have been accommodating a **RIVALRY** that existed between neighboring cities. The source of Nathanael's attitude is **NOT REVEALED** in the Scripture.

- 5) **PHILIP SAID (V. 46), "... , 'COME AND SEE.'**"
- 6) **NATHANAEL MADE THE TRIP WITH PHILIP. NATHANAEL'S SEEKING HEART WAS OF GREATER INFLUENCE** than his **NEGATIVE ATTITUDE**.

- 7) **WHEN JESUS SAW NATHANAEL, HE SAID: (V. 47), "... Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"**

- 8) **NATHANAEL ASKED: (V. 48 NIV), "... "HOW DO YOU KNOW ME?"**"

S That was **A LEGITIMATE QUESTION** because Nathanael had never met Jesus before. How did Jesus know him?

- 9) **JESUS ANSWERED (V. 48 NIV), "'I saw you while you were still UNDER THE FIG TREE before Philip called you.'**"

S **THE THEOLOGICAL TERM** used to describe Jesus' knowledge of Nathanael's location and activity is **OMNISCIENCE**.

OMNISCIENCE simply means **"ALL KNOWLEDGE."**

- (1) **(Prov 5:21 NIV)**, "For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all his paths."
- (2) **(Prov 15:3)**, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
- (3) **(Jer 16:17)**, "For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes."
- (4) **(Psa 94:9)**, "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?"
- (5) **(Psa 94:11)**, "The LORD knows the thoughts of man, . . . "

S **JESUS KNOWS! GOD SEES** when we are **UNDER OUR FIG TREE**. God has **FULL VIEW** of **THE SECRET PLACES OF OUR LIVES**. He knows our **THOUGHTS**. He sees our **CHARACTER**. He hears our **PRAYERS**

**(Mat 6:6)**, "But you, when you pray, enter into thy closet, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which **SEES IN SECRET** shall reward you openly."

S **WE ARE NOT TOLD WHAT NATHANAEL WAS DOING** under that fig tree? **Jesus knew. Nathanael knew. We do not know.** THE ANSWER IS LEFT TO OUR SPECULATION. **MY GUESS** is that he was having his **PRIVATE DEVOTIONS** with the Lord. I think he was **pouring his heart out** to God in prayer and **reading the Bible**.

**SOME FOLKS SPECULATE** that Nathanael was reading **GENESIS 28**. In that passage **JACOB** was running from his brother Esau. He stopped for the night and slept. While he slept, he had a dream.

**(Gen 28:12-13)**, "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. {13} And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;"

**THE PARALLEL** between **Gen 28** and **John 1** is the mention of angels ascending and descending.

10) **NATHANAEL'S RESPONSE TO JESUS WAS IMMEDIATE**

**(V. 49)**, ". . . Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

11) **JESUS MADE A PROMISE TO NATHANAEL**. God **REWARDED** his faithfulness. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is **A REWARDER** of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6).

**(V. 50-51 NIV)**, "Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. **YOU SHALL SEE** greater things than that." {51} He then added, "I tell you the truth, **YOU SHALL SEE** heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.""

**A PARALLEL VERSE:**

**(Mat 5:8)**, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for **THEY SHALL SEE** God."

**S TWO COMMON THREADS BIND THOSE TWO VERSES TOGETHER.**

(1) The first is **A PROMISE, "SHALL SEE."** In both instances, Jesus promised the sight of **GREATER THINGS**.  
**(V. 50 NIV)**, "Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. **YOU SHALL SEE GREATER THINGS** than that.""

(2) **THE SECOND COMMON THREAD** between THOSE VERSES IS **THE KIND OF PERSON THE PROMISE IS ADDRESSED TO**. **THE PROMISE** is addressed to the person **WITHOUT GUILF** in their heart. In Matthew 5 the promise is addressed to the person with **"A PURE HEART."**

**S THE GOOD NEWS** is the person who comes to Jesus by faith is **CLEANSED** from their sin. **"THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN."** (1 John 1:7)

**S THERE IS GOOD REASON TO MAINTAIN** A HEART WITHOUT **GUILF** because **THE ABILITY TO SEE GOD IS DEPENDENT UPON A PURE HEART**. **IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THE PURE IN HEART SEE GOD IN THIS LIFE IN WAYS** the impure in heart can never see Him.

## MANY VERSES:

- **(Psa 24:3-4)**, “**WHO SHALL** ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? {4} **HE THAT** hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”
- **(Heb 12:14)**, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:”
- JESUS SAID **(John 14:21)**, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and **WILL MANIFEST MYSELF TO HIM.**” (THE CONVERSE IS TRUE, TOO)
- **(1 Cor 2:9)**, “But as it is written, **EYE HATH NOT SEEN,** nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them **THAT LOVE HIM.**”

## SCRIPTURE SHOWS MANY EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO WERE PERMITTED TO SEE MORE:

- 1) **MOSES WAS PERMITTED TO SEE WHAT OTHERS COULD NOT:** **(Heb 11:24-27)**, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; {25} Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; {26} Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. {27} By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: **FOR HE ENDURED, as SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE.**” (Moses SAW THINGS no one else in Pharaoh’s palace could see)
- 2) **ELISHA WAS PERMITTED TO SEE WHAT OTHERS COULD NOT.** Elisha’s servant went **OUT SIDE** the house one morning and became alarmed because of what he saw. A great army with horses and chariots surrounded the city. The servant asked Elisha, “What shall we do?” LISTEN TO **ELISHA’S RESPONSE.** **(2 Ki 6:16-17)**, “. . . Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. {17} And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And **THE LORD OPENED THE EYES OF THE YOUNG MAN; AND HE SAW:** and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”
- 3) The things God allows his servants to see **ARE NOT ALWAYS THAT DRAMATIC,** but God does allow his servants to see things the world never sees apart from love for God. The things they see are **wonderful.**
  - Several of us heard **TIM LAHAYE**, the author of the *LEFT BEHIND SERIES*, this past Tuesday night (10/23/01) at the DoubleTree in Pasco. Jerry Jenkins, coauthor with LaHaye, originally felt the first book titled *LEFT BEHIND*, might sell 100,000 copies. The first book has actually sold more than **five million copies.** The entire *LEFT BEHIND SERIES* at present has sold more than **32 MILLION** copies worldwide. People ask Dr. LaHaye about the *LEFT BEHIND SERIES* all the time. Dr. LaHaye humbly states the privilege of writing the series was **A GIFT** from God. He said that he **WAS AS AMAZED** at what God had done through that series as anyone in the

audience might have been. He commented that God can use anybody if they let Him. I wrote Dr. LaHaye's comments down at the time because they illustrated this message. Tim LaHaye never envisioned that God would use him the way He has chosen to do. Perhaps every committed Christian can make the same kind of comment.

- **JAMES IRWIN** was **AN AMERICAN ASTRONAUT** who rode on **APOLLO 15** and landed on the moon on **AUG. 7, 1971**. He stated that from the moon the earth looked as if it were a little Christmas tree ornament. He was so moved by GOD that he came back and surrendered to the Gospel ministry. He shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ as he traveled the United States telling his story. **IN CONTRAST, OTHERS** have been shot into the same space and their comments did not resemble James' Irwin's comment at all. One man stated regarding his trip into space, "I don't see God anywhere." One man, James Irwin could see God, while the other man could not. They flew into the same space and one was able to see God's handiwork, while the other one was not. Why did one see God's magnificence and the other did not? **JESUS HELPS US UNDERSTAND:**

**(Luke 10:21)**, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

#### S **JESUS SAID TO NATHANAEL:**

**(V. 50 NIV)**, "... 'You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. **YOU SHALL SEE GREATER THINGS** than that.'"

THE THINGS GOD PROMISED NATHANAEL WOULD SEE:

#### **I. A LOOK BACK — PROMISES ALREADY FULFILLED**

#### **II. A LOOK FORWARD — PROMISES YET TO BE FULFILLED**

### **I. A LOOK BACK — PROMISES ALREADY FULFILLED**

- S **IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND** those promises already fulfilled, it is helpful to **JOURNEY BACK IN TIME** to the days of Nathanael and Philip. In their day and time they were looking forward to the coming of God's promised Messiah. In our day and times we look back at the Messiah having already come. I can hear Philip and Nathanael in their **WEEKLY HOME BIBLE STUDY** as they pour over the Scripture seeking to understand the truths God had revealed concerning the coming Messiah. Deep in their heart they wondered on many occasions how close they might be to the appointed time.

- S I CAN HEAR **THE PROPHECY NAYSAYERS**. A PROPHECY NAYSAYER is the person who is always down on those who enjoy studying what God has revealed concerning future things. They existed in Nathanael's day just as they exist in our day. **THEY SAY** something like, "Why don't you folks speak of something that is relevant and applicable for today." "You guys are always thinking about the future." "Why don't you folks do something that is of benefit today and forget about the future?"

S It is interesting that Scripture tells us that prophecy is of benefit in helping a person live a proper life in the present tense.

**(2 Pet 3:11-12)**, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, { 12 } Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”

**(V. 14)**, “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

S **NATHANAEL AND PHILIP HAD BOTH BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO A COMING MESSIAH.** Beyond the shadow of a doubt, **BOTH WERE PROPHECY BUFFS.** They had taken O.T. PROPHECY and tried to understand it in light of their present world situation. They did not understand every detail of the prophecy accurately, but **THEY DID UNDERSTOOD TWO THINGS CLEARLY :**

- 1) **THE MESSIAH WAS COMING.**
- 2) **THE MESSIAH WOULD IN COMPLIANCE WITH** God’s prophetic portrayal of Him.

BECAUSE **PHILIP UNDERSTOOD PROPHECY, HE SAID TO NATHANAEL: (V. 45)**, “. . . WE HAVE **FOUND HIM**, of whom **Moses** in the **law**, and **the prophets**, did write, . . . ”

BECAUSE **NATHANAEL UNDERSTOOD PROPHECY, HE SAID TO JESUS: (V. 49)**, “. . . Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.”

S **WHAT A DAY OF JOY IT WAS** when Philip and Nathanael were permitted to **SEE PROPHECY FULFILLED** before their very eyes.

S **LET’S LOOK AT THE PROPHECY REGARDING THE COMING MESSIAH FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE 2000 YEARS AGO.** We have the advantage of **HINDSIGHT.** It is said that “hindsight has 20/20 vision.” It has perfect vision. We can look back and see how prophecy regarding Jesus’ first coming has already been fulfilled. They had to take O.T. prophecies and **WEIGH IT ON THE SPOT TO DETERMINE IF** “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” was truly God’s Messiah.

S **PHILIP’S FIRST DESIGNATED LOCATION FOR MESSIANIC PROPHECY WAS:**

#### **#1. PROPHECIES FROM “MOSES IN THE LAW” (v. 45)**

**THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS** of the O.T. are called the **PENTATEUCH** or **“THE LAW OF MOSES.”** Moses was the person God used to record the first five books of the Bible. **TWO PROPHECIES FROM THE LAW ARE:**

- 1) **(Gen 49:10)**, “The scepter shall not depart from **JUDAH**, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until **SHILOH** come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” (The Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah)
- 2) **(Deu 18:15)**, “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee **A PROPHET** from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto

him ye shall hearken;" (VV. 18-19)

- **IN JOHN 1:19 THE JEWS SENT PRIESTS AND LEVITES** from Jerusalem to ask John the Baptist who he was. Do you remember how they worded their question to John? **(John 1:21 NIV)**, "They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." **"ARE YOU THE PROPHET?"** He answered, "No."" (They were referring to the prophet mentioned in Deut. 18)

#### #1. "MOSES IN THE LAW"

#### #2. PROPHECIES FROM "THE PROPHETS" (v. 45)

- **(Micah 5:2)**, "But thou, **BETHLEHEM EPHRATAH**, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."
- **(Isa 53:2-4)**, "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath **NO FORM NOR COMELINESS**; and when we shall see him, there is **NO BEAUTY** that we should desire him. {3} He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. {4} Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."
- **(Jer 23:5-6)**, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **I WILL RAISE UNTO DAVID A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. {6} In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**"

**OTHER PROPHECIES REGARDING THE MESSIAH WOULD BE MANIFEST AFTER THE RESURRECTION.** At the time of the events recorded in John 1, the resurrection had not yet taken place. Again, we have the advantage of hindsight that Philip and Nathanael did not have at that time.

**SCRIPTURE FORETOLD THE MESSIAH WOULD RIDE A DONKEY INTO JERUSALEM:**

- **(Zec 9:9)**, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; **LOWLY**, and **RIDING UPON AN ASS**, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

**SCRIPTURE FORETOLD THE MESSIAH WOULD BE BETRAYED BY A FRIEND FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER:**

- **(Zec 11:12-13)**, "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. {13} And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potters: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potters in the house of the LORD."

**SCRIPTURE FORETOLD THE MESSIAH WOULD DIE BY CRUCIFIXION:**

- **(Psa 22:16)**, "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."

SCRIPTURE FORETOLD THE MESSIAH WOULD BE **RESURRECTED** FROM THE DEAD

- **(Psa 16:10)**, “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

## S WE HAVE BEEN TOLD

- **THE O.T. CONTAINS 333 PROPHECIES** regarding the Lord Jesus Christ. In those 333 prophecies are **456 FACTUAL DETAILS**.
- IN A BOOK TITLED *THE CASE FOR JESUS THE MESSIAH: INCREDIBLE PROPHECIES THAT PROVES GOD EXISTS* written by **Ankerburg, Weldon & Kaiser** is discussed **THE PROBABILITY** of just **eight of those details** coming to pass in one person.

To make a long story short, they state **THE PROBABILITY** of just eight of those prophecies coming true in one person would be **"one in ten to the seventeenth power."** Remember, there are **333 prophecies** which include **456 factual details**.

**THE POSSIBILITY** of all those facts coming true in one person **does not exist apart from divine intervention** and supervision. **NOBEL PRIZE WINNING SCIENTISTS** have pointed out that **IF ANYTHING HAS A CHANCE LESS THAN 10 TO THE 50TH POWER** it will never happen, even cosmically. It simply will never take place.

- ## S IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT ONE HALF
- of the Bible’s prophecies have already been **FULFILLED**. THAT MEANS **MUCH IS YET TO BE FULFILLED**. Almost all of **THE BOOK OF REVELATION** addresses things yet future.

- ## S WE CAN REST ASSURED
- that the same God who has brought one half of those prophecies to fulfillment, will bring the other half to fulfillment, too. **JESUS SAID:**

**(Mark 13:31)**, “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”

- ## S AS A PERSON RECOGNIZES
- that Jesus fulfilled PAST PROPHECIES, they will be **INCLINED TO MAKE THE SAME CONFESSION** THAT NATHANAEL DID:

**(V. 49)**, “. . . Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.”

## I. A LOOK BACK — PROMISES ALREADY FULFILLED

## II. A LOOK FORWARD — PROMISES YET TO BE FULFILLED

**(V. 50-51)**, “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. {51} 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.”

- ## S
- Jesus was **SPEAKING FUTURE TENSE**. Nathanael believed Jesus, and as a result, he was going to be blessed with the sight of untold things at some point in the future.

S JESUS' STATEMENT **BEGS A QUESTION, "WHEN WILL IT BE FULFILLED?"** When would Nathanael see the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man? **MANY SUGGESTIONS** are offered. Whichever answer is accurate, it must meet **ALL FIVE ELEMENTS OF JESUS' PROMISE**. The **FIVE ELEMENTS ARE**:

- (1) **"HEREAFTER" (future tense)**
- (2) **"HEAVEN OPEN"**
- (3) **"ANGEL'S OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING"**
- (4) **"SON OF MAN"** (Jesus must be present)
- (5) **NATHANAEL WILL BE PRESENT TO SEE IT**

**THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROPHECY** ought to include **ALL FIVE ELEMENTS** in the fulfillment.

S **SEVERAL SUGGESTED INTERPRETATIONS CONTAIN PARTS OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS**, but **ONLY ONE** fulfills all five completely.

- 1) **JACOB'S VISION** (Genesis 28) is often referenced in trying to understand Jesus' promise to Nathanael. It is true that Jacob saw heaven opened and angels ascending and descending. But Jacob's vision was **not future tense**. It was present tense to Jacob.
- 2) THE TWO RECORDS WHERE **JESUS WAS MINISTERED TO BY ANGELS** HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED AS THE FULFILLMENT. Angels did minister to Jesus while on earth. Angels ministered to Jesus at the conclusion of His **WILDERNESS TEMPTATION** (Matt 4:11; Mark 1:13). Angels also ministered to Jesus while in the garden of **GETHSEMANE** (Luke 22:43). **THE PROBLEM** with that interpretation is that **NATHANAEL WAS NOT PRESENT** with Jesus in the wilderness or in Gethsemane.
- 3) **THREE TIMES DURING JESUS' MINISTRY THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED:**

❶ **AT JESUS' BAPTISM** God opened heaven in the sense that He sent the Holy Spirit upon Jesus in the form of a dove. The Father spoke from heaven and said:

**(Mat 3:17)**, "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

❷ **AT THE TRANSFIGURATION** heaven was opened. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus. Jesus was transfigured and shined with the radiance of the sun. The Father's voice spoke from out of cloud and said:

**(Mat 17:5)**, "... 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.'"

**THE PROBLEM** with accepting those two instances as the fulfillment of Jesus' promise is that **NATHANAEL WAS NOT PRESENT** at either happening. In addition, there were no visible angels ascending or descending.

❸ **JESUS' ASCENSION IN ACTS 1** comes closest to fulfilling the five elements than anything mentioned thus far. After His resurrection, Jesus took His disciples to the Mount of Olives. Here is what happened:

**(Acts 1:9-11)**, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, **HE WAS TAKEN UP**; and **A CLOUD RECEIVED HIM** out of their sight. {10} And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, **TWO MEN STOOD BY THEM IN WHITE APPAREL**; {11} Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

NATHANAEL WAS PRESENT AT THAT EVENT. It is true that **ANGELS DID DESCEND** to talk to the disciples. **BUT THE PROBLEM** with accepting this as the fulfillment of Jesus' promise is there is no indication of angels ascending, at least not in the sense that they did in Jacob's dream in Genesis 28.

**THE FIVE REQUIREMENTS THAT HAVE TO BE MET ARE:**

1. **"HEREAFTER"** (future)
2. **"HEAVEN OPENED"**
3. **"ANGEL'S OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING"** (angels were present)
4. **"SON OF MAN"**
5. **NATHANAEL PRESENT**

Acts 1 comes very close to fulfilling all the required elements, but still, it seems to fall short.

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**WHAT IS THE FULFILLMENT OF JESUS' PROMISE THAT INCLUDED ALL FIVE OF ELEMENTS? THE ONLY EVENT THAT FULLY SATISFIES ALL FIVE REQUIREMENTS PERFECTLY IS THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS.**

**#1. THE SECOND COMING WILL BE "HEREAFTER"**

S Jesus is going to return, but it is **FUTURE TENSE**

**#2. WHEN JESUS RETURNS "HEAVEN WILL BE OPENED"**

S **(Rev 19:11)**, "And I saw **HEAVEN OPENED**, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

**#3. AT JESUS' RETURN ANGEL'S WILL ASCEND AND DESCEND**

S **(Mat 16:27)**, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father **WITH HIS ANGELS**; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

S **(Mat 13:49)**, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the **ANGELS SHALL COME FORTH**, and sever the wicked from among the just,"

**#4. SON OF MAN WILL APPEAR**

**(Mat 24:27)**, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of **THE SON OF MAN** be."

S **NATHANAEAL'S CONFESSION** used the TITLE "**SON OF GOD.**" **JESUS' PROMISE** referred to the same person, but used **A DIFFERENT TITLE.** LISTEN TO **JESUS' PROMISE:**

**(V. 51)**, ". . . Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon **THE SON OF MAN.**"

- THE TITLE *SON OF MAN* is used **108X's** IN THE **O.T.**
- THE TITLE *SON OF MAN* is used **88X's** IN THE **N.T.**
- "**SON OF MAN**" WAS **JESUS' FAVORITE SELF-DESIGNATION.** It emphasized **TWO THINGS:**
  - 1) It emphasized HIS **IDENTITY WITH HUMANITY**
  - 2) It identified Him as the fulfillment of the prophecy in **DANIEL 7:13.** **JESUS REGARDED DANIEL 7:13 AS A PROPHECY OF HIMSELF.** Daniel 7:13 uses the term "**SON OF MAN.**"

**(Dan 7:13)**, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, **ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN** came **WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN**, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him."

**(Dan 7:14)**, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

S **JESUS WAS BEING TRIED BEFORE THE ANGRY COURT** assembled for the purpose of His **conviction** and **crucifixion** in **MATTHEW 26:**

- (1) THE HIGH PRIEST ASKED HIM:**  
**(Mat 26:63 NIV)**, ". . . "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, **THE SON OF GOD.**"

THE HIGH PRIEST **DID NOT ASK HIM IF** He was the "SON OF MAN." He asked Jesus if He was the "Son of God."

- (2) JESUS' EVENTUAL ANSWER:**  
**(Mat 26:64)**, "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see **THE SON OF MAN** sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

THAT SOUNDS LIKE:

**(Dan 7:13)**, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, **ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN** CAME **WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN**

S **BILLY GRAHAM**

"If Jesus is who He claimed to be, the most important thing you will ever do is get to know Him."

S **C. S. LEWIS** wrote in **MERE CHRISTIANITY:**

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said wouldn't be a great moral teacher. He would either be a

lunatic on the level with a man who says he's a poached egg - or else he would be the devil of hell; you must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But don't come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great moral teacher. He hasn't left that alternative open to us." (Lewis was a Professor at Oxford University. He was a skeptic and an agnostic. He denied deity of Christ. Later in life he became a believer in Jesus Christ.)

#### **#5. NATHANAEL WILL BE PRESENT TO OBSERVE**

**(V. 51)**, "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."

**(1 Th 3:13)**, "To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, **AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH ALL HIS SAINTS.**"

- S Nathanael will see "**GREATER THINGS THAN THESE**" (V. 50)
- S **DON'T MISS THE THINGS GOD WANTS TO SHOW YOU!**

**(1 Cor 2:9)**, ". . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."