

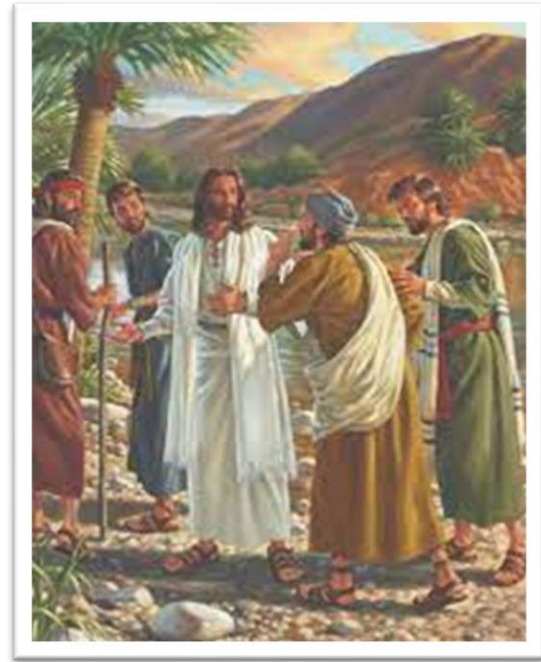
First Formal Call of Peter, Philip, and Nathanael

Jesus departed before daybreak from Thebez. He and His disciples proceeded at first eastward, and then turning to the north, journeyed along the base of the mountain and through the valley of the Jordan toward Tiberias. He passed through Abelmahula, a beautiful city, where the mountain extends more to the north. It was the birthplace of Eliseus. The city is built on a spur of the mountain, and I noticed the great difference between the fruitfulness of its sunny side and its northern one.

The inhabitants were tolerably good. They had heard of the miracles wrought by Jesus at Kibzaim and Thebez, so they stayed with Him on the way, begging Him to tarry with them and heal their sick. The excitement became almost tumultuous, but Jesus did not stay with them long. This city was about four hours from Thebez. Jesus passed near Scythopolis and on to the Jordan.

As He was journeying from Abelmahula, He met near a little city about six hours from Tiberias, Andrew, Peter, and John. Leaving the other friends in Gennabris, these three had come on to meet Jesus. Peter and John were in this part of the country upon some business connected with their fishery. They intended to proceed direct to Gennabris, but Andrew persuaded them to go first to meet the Lord. Andrew presented his brother to Jesus, who among other words said to him: This was said at the first salutation. To John, Jesus addressed some words relative to their next meeting. Then Peter and John went out to Gennabris, while Andrew accompanied Jesus into the environs of Tarichaea.

John the Baptist had by this time abandoned his place of baptism on this side of the Jordan. He had crossed the river and was now baptizing about one hour to the north of Bethabara, at the place whereon Jesus had lately allowed the disciples to baptize and where John himself had baptized at an earlier period. John had made this change to suit the convenience of the people from the region under Philip the Tetrarch. Philip was a good-natured man. Many of his people desired baptism, but were unwilling to cross the Jordan to receive it. Among them were many of the heathens. The last visit that Jesus made to this part of the country had roused in numbers the desire after baptism. Another reason also influenced John to baptize where Jesus' disciples had lately been similarly engaged, and that was to show that there



was no disunion between him and Jesus.

When Jesus with Andrew reached the neighborhood of Tarichaea, He put up near the lake at a house belonging to Peter's fishery. Andrew had previously given orders for preparations to be made for Jesus' reception. Jesus did not go into the city. There was something dark and repulsive about the inhabitants, who were deeply engaged in usury and thought only of gain. Simon, who here had some employment, had with Thaddeus and James the Less, his brothers, gone for the feast to Gennabris, where James the Greater and John were. Lazarus, Saturnin, and Simeon's son came here to meet Jesus, as also the bridegroom of Cana. The last named invited Jesus and all His company to his marriage.

The principal motive that led Jesus to pass a couple of days in the vicinity of Tarichaea was that He desired to give the future Apostles and disciples time to communicate to one another the reports circulated about Himself, and especially what Andrew and Saturnin had to relate. He desired also that, by more frequent intercourse, they should better understand one another.

While Jesus traversed the country around Tarichaea, I saw Andrew remaining in the house. He was busy writing letters with a reed upon strips of parchment. The writings could be rolled into a little hollow, wooden cylinder and unrolled at pleasure. I saw men and youths frequently entering the house, and seeking employment. Andrew engaged them as couriers to convey to Philip and his half brother Jonathan, also to Peter and the others at Gennabris, letters notifying them that Jesus would go to Capharnaum for the Sabbath and engaging them to meet Him there.

Meanwhile a messenger arrived from Capharnaum begging Andrew to solicit Jesus to go thither right away, for a messenger from Cades had been there awaiting Him for the past few days. This man wanted to ask Jesus for help. Accordingly, with Andrew, Saturnin, Obed, and some of John's disciples, Jesus set out from the fisher house near Tarichaea to Capharnaum. This last named city was not close to the lake, but on the plateau and southern slope of a mountain. On the western side of the lake, the mountain formed a valley through which the Jordan flowed into the lake. Jesus and His companions went separately, Andrew with his half-brother Jonathan, and Philip—both of whom had come in answer to his notification—walked together. Jonathan and Philip had not yet met Jesus. Andrew spoke enthusiastically to them. He told them all that he had seen of Jesus, and protested that He was indeed the Messiah. If they desired to follow Him, he added, there was no need of their presenting to Him a formal petition to that effect; all they had to do was to regard Him attentively, and He, seeing their earnest wish, would give them a hint, a word to join His followers.

Mary and the holy women were not in Capharnaum itself, but at Mary's house in the valley out-side the city and nearer to the lake. It was there that they celebrated the feast. The sons of Mary Cleophas, Peter, James the Greater, and his brother John had already arrived from Gennabris with others of the future disciples. Chased (Nathanael), Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, however, were not present. But there were many other relatives and friends of the Holy Family who had been invited to Cana for the wedding, celebrating the Sabbath here, because they had been notified that Jesus was expected.

Jesus along with Andrew, Saturnin, some of John's disciples, Lazarus, and Obed, stopped at a house belonging to the bridegroom Nathanael. Nathanael's parents were dead. They had left a large patrimony to their son. The future disciples, just come from Gennabris, experienced a certain shyness in Jesus' company. They were actuated in this by the influence Nathanael Chased's opinion had over them and then again, by the thought of the wonderful things they had heard of Jesus from Andrew and some others of John's disciples. They were restrained also by their own natural bashfulness and likewise by the remembrance of what Andrew had told them; viz., that they were not to make advances themselves, but merely pay attention to the teaching of Jesus, for that would be sufficient to make them decide to follow Him.

For two whole days had the messenger from Cades been waiting here for Jesus. Now he approached Him, cast himself at His feet, and informed Him that he was the servant of a man of Cades. His master, he said, entreated Jesus to return with him and cure his little son who was afflicted with leprosy and a dumb devil. This man was a most faithful servant; he placed his master's trouble before Jesus in very pathetic words. Jesus replied that He could not return with him, but still the child should receive assistance, for he was an innocent boy. Then He directed the servant to tell his master to stretch himself with extended arms over his son, to recite certain prayers, and the leprosy would disappear. After which, he, the servant himself, should lie upon the boy and breathe into his mouth. A blue vapor would then escape from the boy and he would be freed from dumbness. I had a glimpse of the father and servant curing the boy, as Jesus had directed.

There were certain mysterious reasons for the command that the father and the servant should stretch themselves alternately upon the boy. The servant himself was the true father of the child, of which fact, however, the master was ignorant. But Jesus knew it. Both had therefore to be instrumental in freeing the child from the penalty of sin.

Cades was about six hours from Capharnaum, on the boundary toward Tyre

and west of Paneas. It was once the capital of the Canaanites, but was now a free city whither the prosecuted might flee from justice. It bordered on a region called Kabul, which had been presented by Solomon to the king of Phoenicia. I saw this region ever dark, gloomy, dismal. Jesus always shunned it when going to Tyre and Sidon. I think robbery and murder were freely carried on in it.

When on the Sabbath Jesus taught in the synagogue, an unusually large crowd was assembled to hear Him, and among His audience were all His friends and relatives. His teaching was entirely novel to these people, and quite transporting in its eloquence. He spoke of the nearness of the Kingdom of God, of the light that should not be hidden under a bushel, of sowing, and of faith like unto a mustard seed. He taught, not in naked parables, but with explanations. The parables were short examples and similitudes, which He used to explain His doctrine more clearly. I have indeed heard Him in His teaching making use of a great many more parables than are related in the Gospel. Those there recorded are such as He most frequently used with explanations more or less varied to suit the occasion.

After the close of the Sabbath, Jesus went with His disciples into a little vale near the synagogue. It seemed intended for a promenade or a place of seclusion. There were trees in front of the entrance, as well as in the vale. The sons of Mary Cleophas, of Zebedee, and some others of the disciples were with Him. But Philip, who was backward and humble, hung behind, not certain as to whether he should or should not follow. Jesus, who was going on before, turned His head and, addressing Philip, said: "Follow Me!" at which words Philip went on joyously with the others. There were about twelve in the little band.

Jesus taught here under a tree, His subject being "Vocation and Correspondence." Andrew, who was full of zeal for his Master's interests, rejoiced at the happy impression made upon the disciples by the teaching of Jesus on the preceding Sabbath. He saw them convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and his own heart was so full that he lost no opportunity to recount to them again and again all that he had seen at Jesus' baptism, also the miracles He had wrought.

I heard Jesus calling Heaven to witness that they should behold still greater things, and He spoke of His mission from His Heavenly Father.

He alluded also to their own vocation, telling them to hold themselves in readiness. They would, He continued, have to forsake all when He called them. He would provide for them, they should suffer no want. They might still continue their customary occupations, because as the Passover was now approaching He would have to discharge other affairs. But when He should

call them, they should follow Him immediately. The disciples questioned Him unrestrainedly as to how they should manage with regard to their families. Peter, for instance, said that just at present he could not leave his old stepfather, who was also Philip's uncle. But Jesus relieved his anxiety by His answer, that He would not begin before the Paschal feast; that only insofar as the heart was concerned, should they detach themselves from their occupations; that exteriorly they should continue them until He called them. In the meantime, however, they should take the necessary steps toward freeing themselves from their different avocations. Jesus then left the vale by the opposite end, and went to His Mother's house, one of a row that stood between Capharnaum and Bethsaida. His nearest relatives accompanied Him, for their mothers also were with Mary.

Very early the next morning, Jesus with His relatives and disciples started for Cana. Mary and the other women went by themselves, taking the more direct and shorter route. It was only a narrow footpath running for the most part over a mountain. The women chose it as being the more private. It was besides wide enough for them, as they usually walked single file. A guide went on ahead, and a servant followed at some distance. Their journey was to the southwest of Capharnaum, almost seven hours.

Jesus and His companions took a more circuitous route through Gennabris. The road was broader and better suited to conversation. Jesus taught along the way. He often halted, gave utterance to some truth, and then explained it. This road was more to the south than that which Mary took. It was almost six hours by it from Capharnaum to Gennabris, at which place it turned southward, and three hours more took the traveler to Cana.

Gennabris was a beautiful city. It had a school and a synagogue. There was also a school of rhetoric, and the trade carried on was extensive. Nathanael had his office outside the city in a high house that stood by itself, though there were others at some distance around it. In spite of the invitation received from the disciples to that effect, he did not go into the city to meet Jesus.

Jesus taught in the synagogue and, with some of the disciples, took a luncheon at the house of a rich Pharisee. The rest of the disciples had already continued their journey to Cana. Jesus had commissioned Philip to go to Nathanael and bring him to meet Him on the way.

Jesus was very honorably treated at Gennabris, and the inhabitants were eager to keep Him with them longer. They brought forward as a reason for His doing so that He was one of their own countrymen, and also that He should have compassion on their sick. But Jesus soon left them and proceeded to Cana.

Meantime Philip had gone to Nathanael's office, in which he found several clerks, Nathanael being in a room upstairs. Philip had never before spoken of Jesus to Nathanael, since he, Nathanael, had not accompanied his friends to Gennabris. They were, however, well acquainted with each other, and Philip, full of joy, was enthusiastic when speaking of Jesus. "He is," he said, "the Messiah of whom the Prophets have spoken. We have found Him, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph."

Nathanael was of a bright, lively disposition, energetic and self-reliant, consequently frank and sincere. In reply to Philip's remarks, Nathanael said: "Can anything very good come from Nazareth?" He knew the reputation of the Nazareans, that they were of a contradictory spirit and were not distinguished for the wisdom of their schools. He thought that a man who had been educated there might indeed shine in the eyes of his credulous and simpleminded friends, but that he could never satisfy his own pretentious claims to learning. But Philip bade him come and see for himself, for Jesus would soon pass that way to Cana. Nathanael accordingly accompanied Philip down by the short road to that house which stood a little off the highway to Cana. Jesus, with some of His disciples, was standing where the road branched off into the highway. Philip, since Jesus' injunction to follow Him, had been as joyous and unrestrained as before he had been timid. Addressing Jesus in a loud voice as they approached, he said: "Rabbi! I bring you here one who has asked: 'What good can come from Nazareth?'" But Jesus, turning to the disciples who were standing around Him, said as Nathanael came forward: "Behold! A true Israelite, in whom there is no guile!" Jesus uttered the words in a kind, affectionate manner. Nathanael responded: "How dost Thou know me?" meaning to say: How knowest Thou that I am true and without guile, since we have never before spoken to each other? Jesus answered: "Before Philip called thee, I saw thee when thou wast standing under the fig tree." These words Jesus accompanied by a significant look at Nathanael intended to recall something to him.

This glance of Jesus instantly awoke in Nathanael the remembrance of a certain passerby whose warning look had endued him with wonderful strength at a moment in which he was struggling with temptation. He had indeed been standing at the time under a fig tree on the pleasure grounds around the warm baths, gazing upon some beautiful women who, on the other side of the meadow, were playing for fruit. The powerful impression produced by that glance, and the victory which Jesus had then enabled him to gain, were fixed in his memory, though perhaps the form of the Man to whom he owed both the one and the other had faded from his mind. Or he may indeed have recognized Jesus without being aware that the warning

glance had been designedly given. But now that Jesus reminded him of it and repeated the significant glance, Nathanael became greatly agitated and impressed. He felt that Jesus in passing had read his thoughts, and had been to him a guardian angel. Nathanael was so pure of heart that a thought contrary to the holy virtue had power to trouble his soul. He recognized, therefore, in Jesus his Saviour and Deliverer. This knowledge of his thoughts was enough for his upright, impetuous, and grateful heart, enough to make him, on the instant, joyfully acknowledge Jesus before all the disciples. Humbling himself before Him as he uttered those significant words, Nathanael exclaimed: "Rabbi! Thou art the Son of God! Thou art Israel's King!" Jesus responded: "Thou believest now because I have said that I saw thee under the fig tree. Verily, thou shalt greater wonders see!" And then turning to all, He said: "Verily! Ye shall see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of Man!" The other disciples, however, did not understand the real import of Jesus' words concerning the fig tree, nor did they know why Nathanael Chased had so quickly declared for Jesus. It was like a matter of conscience hidden from all excepting John, to whom Nathanael himself entrusted it at the marriage feast of Cana. Nathanael asked Jesus whether he should at once leave all things and follow Him, for that he had a brother, to whom he could make over his employment. Jesus answered him as He had the others on the preceding evening, and invited him to Cana for the marriage feast. Then Jesus and His disciples proceeded on their way to Cana, Nathanael Chased meanwhile returning home to prepare for the wedding, for which he set out on the following morning.