

“THOU SHALT SEE GREATER THINGS THAN THESE”

INTRODUCTION

Early in the ministry of Jesus, He said to one who was about to become one of His apostles, *“Thou shalt see greater things than these.”* (John 1:50) One man named Philip had just become acquainted with Jesus, and decided to follow Jesus in His invitation, *“Follow me”* (John 1:43) Philip found another man named “Nathanael”, and told him about his having met Jesus, as the man about whom Moses wrote. Nathanael was skeptical, so Philip said to him, *“Come and see.”* When he came near Jesus, the Lord said **to** Nathanael, *“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.”* (John 1:48). At this point, Nathanael wanted to know **how** Jesus knew him so well. Jesus told him that before Philip had called him, that He (Jesus) had seen him under the fig tree. This great ability to know so much about Nathanael convinced him also, that Jesus was indeed *“the Son of God”* and *“the King of Israel.”* This makes Nathaniel the very first person to ever acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. At this point, Jesus said to Nathanael, *“Thou shalt see greater things than these.”*

What **were** the “greater things” Nathanael was going to see?

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, Nathanael was to see “heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

John 1:51; “....Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

- A. This one of four occurrences in the New Testament where it said that the “heavens opened.”
1. When Jesus was baptized, “the heavens were opened”, and God acknowledged Jesus as His Son, and bestowed upon Him the full measure of the Holy Spirit. Matt. 3:16
 2. When Stephen was being stoned to death, He saw “the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing” on the right hand of God.” Acts 7:56
 3. In Peter's vision to reveal God's inclusion of the Gentiles in the scheme of redemption, he saw “heaven opened”. Acts 10:11
 4. Now we the “Son of man” referred to by Jesus (one of some 70 times He refers to Himself as such) as the central figure in heaven's mission.
- B. Here is an obvious allusion to the dream Jacob had in Gen. 28:12, of angels ascending and descending on a ladder from earth to heaven, stated in the same order as given in Gen. 28:12. (Read and discuss as desired)
1. This may be viewed as a passing reference to an interesting dream, but is very likely prophetic in that the “Son of man” is about to usher in a ladder from earth to heaven, with His servants making it known, and that not only Nathanael, but all the apostles would have part in it.
 2. This would be a broad or general picture of the gospel age about to begin that Nathanael would see, of which he would be a part.
 3. What an interesting way for the Lord to introduce His mission as the “Son of man” who came to seek and save the lost. Luke 19:10

II. 2nd, we find four (4) other things Nathanael saw that relate to the mission of Christ in the scheme of redemption.

- A. First, Nathanael would see JESUS RAISE THE DEAD.
 - 1. He probably saw Jesus raise the widow's son in Nain. Luke 7:11-17
 - 2. Nathanael was surely present when Lazarus was raised to life. John 11:7-17, 39-44 (Discuss in detail as desired)

- B. Second, Nathanael would see JESUS GIVE SIGHT TO THE BLIND.
 - 1. One such event is recorded in Matt. 9:27-30 (Discuss)
 - 2. Another event is recorded in John 9:1-12 (Discuss)

- C. Third, Nathanael would see JESUS RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD.
 - 1. Jesus appeared to Nathanael and the other apostles, and upbraided them for their unbelief that He **was** resurrected. Mark 16:14
 - 2. Once Jesus appeared to the disciples, with Nathanael (or Bartholomew) being present. John 20:19-29

- D. Fourth, Nathanael would see JESUS ASCEND INTO HEAVEN.
 - 1. All the eleven living disciples saw this great transaction take place. Acts 1:10-13
 - 2. What a **grand** climax to an earthly association with the Savior, after after having seen His many miracles, and then seeing Him after the resurrection, and now see Him ascend into heaven.

CONCLUSION

- I. We did not see the great events Nathanael saw, but we shall see **even greater** things than he was able to see, which Nathanael shall also see.
 - A. We will be able to see Jesus in His glorified body. Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 2:2
 - B. We shall also see the beauties and glories of the eternal city of God.
 - 1. This city will be lighted with the glory of God. Rev. 21:23
 - 2. We shall also see the water of life and the lovely tree of life, as well as to be able to partake of them. Rev. 22:1-2, 14
- II. We **can** see these great things **if** we are obedient to Jesus in this life. Heb. 5:8-9

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