

The Word That Opens Heaven

John 1:35-51

Introduction

Good morning and Merry Christmas! My name is Brad and I'm one of the pastors here. As part of our celebration of Christmas we have been walking through a sermon series in the Gospel of John titled, "The Word Became Flesh". This series is meant to answer the question, "Why did God become a man in the Person of Jesus Christ?"

If you think about it, if God really is who Christians believe him to be, and he can do anything, couldn't he have revealed himself to the world in a different way? Couldn't he have done something simpler than sending his own Son on a mission to die on a cross? The fourth century bishop, Athanasius of Alexandria, believed answering *this question* was the key to truly understanding the Incarnation of Christ and being changed forever.¹

So, today we'll be answering that question from John 1:35-51 in a message titled, "The Word That Opens Heaven". You can find that passage on page 886 if you're using one of the Bibles in the chairs. Today's main idea is inspired by the words of Jacob in the book of Genesis: Surely Jesus is the gate of heaven, and we did not know it (—so come and see!).² Since there are a number of characters in today's story who did not realize at first who Jesus was, their unique encounters with Jesus will serve as our outline: Andrew - vv. 35-40, Simon - vv. 41-42, Philip - vv. 43-44, and Nathanael - vv. 45-51.

With that said, if you are able, please stand with me to honor the reading of God's word. Again, today's passage is John 1:35-51. Church, hear the word of the Lord:

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

¹ St Athanasius the Great of Alexandria, *On the Incarnation*, Popular Patristics Series

² Genesis 28:16-17
