

REFLECTING ON GOD'S WORD

Reading: John 1:43-51 (NT page 1064)

REFLECTION

The text verse is verse ⁴⁶ "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip."

Who was this Nathanael? His name only appears in the Gospel of John.

According to the Gospel, he was from Cana in Galilee and he was brought by Philip to Jesus, sceptical about the possibility of a Messiah from Nazareth. He was astonished that Jesus knew him already, having seen him under the fig tree. He confessed that Jesus was Son of God and King of Israel. This was the confession of an 'Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit'. He was also one of those who saw Christ on his resurrection appearance by the Sea of Tiberias according to John chapter 21.

So what was wrong with Nazareth?

Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was the home of Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:39), and here the angel announced to the Virgin the birth of the Messiah (1:26–28). Here Jesus grew up from his infancy to manhood (4:16); and here he began his public ministry in the synagogue (Matt. 13:54), at which the people were so offended that they sought to cast him down from the cliff whereon their city was built (Luke 4:29). Twice they expelled him from their borders (4:16–29; Matt. 13:54–58); and he finally retired from the city, where he did not many mighty works because of their unbelief (Matt. 13:58), and took up his residence in Capernaum.

Nazareth is situated among the southern ridges of Lebanon, on the steep slope of a hill, about 14 miles from the Sea of Galilee and about 6 miles west from Mount Tabor.

It is supposed from the words of Nathanael in John 1:46 that the city of Nazareth was held in great disrepute, either because, it is said, the people of Galilee were a

rude and less cultivated class, and were largely influenced by the Gentiles who mingled with them, or because of their lower type of moral and religious character. But there seems to be no sufficient reason for these suppositions. The Jews believed that, according to Micah 5:2, the birth of the Messiah would take place at Bethlehem, and nowhere else. Nathanael held the same opinion as his countrymen, and believed that the great “good” which they were all expecting could not come from Nazareth. This is probably what Nathanael meant. Moreover, there does not seem to be any evidence that the inhabitants of Galilee were in any respect inferior, or that a Galilean was held in contempt, in the time of our Lord.

So what good could come from Nazareth? Well we all know the answer. Jesus is indeed what Nathanael confessed, our Saviour and Lord.

Children:

In the same token, Jesus said we are the salt of the world. We have to be salt for everyone. But again we live in a time, where we are warned to stay away from SALT. Do you like SALT? Well the standard answer is to stay away. So we can ask Nathanael’s question different: What good can come from SALT!

Well lets see:

S is for Seasoning: salt brings flavour to life – in moderation ofcourse!

In the same way - May we add colour and taste to the world and help others to enjoy life in all its diversity and beauty.

A is for Antiseptic: salt cleans, preserves and draws out poisons.

May we be honest and open, enabling healing and justice to our world.

L is for Life-affirming: salt is hidden - yet essential for life.

May we be constant and dependable, offering acts of kindness without making a fuss.

T is for Thirst-making: salt creates a thirst for the water of life.

May we thirst for a deeper relationship with God and create a thirst for others to seek life in all its fullness.

So yes we cannot generalise and just judge a book by its colour. We must use salt like everything else in moderation. Then it is not bad for us....

I mean no-one thought that Jesus, who came from a small village like Nazareth can do great things.

So next time, when someone slags you down, remember God made you and accepted you through His grace. And show them that you belong to God by being good, by being loving and forgiving.

Jesus showed his disciples and all of us through His actions of love and forgiveness who He really was. Where He came from did not matter at all!

So lets all be the salt to the world, changing it for the better, showing them the love and forgiveness of God!

Amen