

THURSDAY, JUNE 6 | To be seen

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." *48* "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

"Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." Deceit. May I bring to your remembrance that in the Old Testament Jacob's name meant deceiver. He was Esau's twin brother. There is an underlying hint referring to the deceit of Jacob before he was renamed Israel by God. "The true Israelite would be the true child of Israel after he had ceased to be the Supplanter." Jesus was telling Nathanael in these few words, he was a true Israelite, not only by birth, but worthy of the name, having the integrity of a Jew, without deceit or hypocrisy, a descendant of Jacob who feared and obeyed God. He wasn't saying Nathanael was sinless, but that he was "sincere and upright".

Because Nathanael didn't know of Jesus' divinity, he considered him a stranger. Jesus had declared Nathanael a true Israelite, so naturally he wanted to know, "How do you know me?" He agreed with what Jesus said about him, but how did Jesus know this, or where did he learn it? With the answer, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you," Nathanael is floored.

Jesus didn't physically pass by where Nathanael was sitting under the fig tree. What was he doing under the tree? More than likely Nathanael was there for a time of meditation and prayer. The Greek word for 'see' in this verse is "*horáō*" meaning: "properly, *see*, often with *metaphorical* meaning: "to see with the mind" (i.e. spiritually see), i.e. perceive (with inward spiritual perception)." I believe it is important to understand this word here because we have so few words but they pack so much meaning. It gets lost on us if we just look at it as simple pleasantries between Jesus and Nathanael, and I fear that's what we do.

When Jesus says, "I saw you...", Nathanael instantly understood that Jesus knew what he meant. That Jesus knew his thoughts and what had been done in secret. Jesus was able to hear his prayer, judge his character, know who he was, and see that he was a true Israelite because he truly knew it. "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree..." said to Nathanael that Jesus was not there physically but divinely. It opened up Nathanael's eyes to what Philip had told him about Jesus and possibly what Nathanael had heard from others. It was all coming into focus for him, and he was amazed. But dare I get ahead of myself.

The last part, "...before Philip called you." At this point, they hadn't had any conversation, right? As far as Nathanael knew, Jesus had no idea they were coming. Jesus couldn't have known they were on their way to him. But now Jesus is telling him these things AND that Philip told him about Jesus. Sound a little familiar? Reminds me of the Samaritan woman who said, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could he be the Messiah?" (John 4:29).

Jesus sees us, too. He is El Roi, the God who sees me. I love this name for God. It's found in Genesis 16:13 when Hagar gives this name to God after she has an encounter with God's messenger and has a change of heart. She realizes God sees her and her future and gives her strength to return home. God sees us. He has a plan for us. We know this! But there are times when I have to thank God that he is "the God who sees me." I don't care if anyone else knows who I am or sees me...sees my picture on social media, or sees what I do, or what they know or see about me; but I do care that God sees me, my heart, my faithfulness, my love for him and others. I am so thankful that God sees my silent hurts and what I go through that no one else knows about. He is the only one that can heal that part of me. God sees all of me, and he sees all of you.

Response: How do you need God to SEE you today? Thank God that "He is the God who sees you."

MEMORY VERSE Hebrews 11:4 – "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."