

John 1:47

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Analysis

Jesus sees Nathanael approaching and declares: 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' This supernatural knowledge of character demonstrates Christ's deity. The word 'dolos' (guile, deceit) indicates Nathanael's sincerity—unlike Jacob who was known for deceit, Nathanael is a true Israelite of honest heart. Jesus distinguishes ethnic Israel from spiritual Israel; Nathanael belongs to the true Israel by character, not merely birth.

Historical Context

The reference to Jacob's deceit (Genesis 27) contrasts with Nathanael's sincerity. 'Israel' means 'prince with God' or 'one who strives with God.' True Israelites are those of genuine faith, not merely ethnic descent. Paul develops this theme in Romans 9:6: 'they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.'

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to be 'an Israelite indeed' in new covenant terms?

2. How does Nathanael's transparency contrast with religious hypocrisy Jesus condemned?

Interlinear Text

Ἰδε ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Ναθαναὴλ ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτοῦ
saw G3588 Jesus G3588 Nathanael G3482 coming G2064 to G4314 him G846
G1492 G2424 G3482 G2064 G4314 G846
καὶ λέγει περὶ αὐτοῦ Ἰδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ἐν ᾧ
and saith of him saw indeed an Israelite in whom
G2532 G3004 G4012 G846 G1492 G230 G2475 G1722 G3739
δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν
guile no is
G1388 G3756 G2076

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 14:5 (Parallel theme): And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Psalms 73:1 (References Israel): Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

Psalms 32:2 (Parallel theme): Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Romans 9:4 (References Israel): Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Romans 9:6 (References Israel): Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: