

John 1:48

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Analysis

Nathanael's astonished question—"Whence knowest thou me?"—exposes the supernatural nature of Jesus' knowledge. Jesus reveals He saw Nathanael 'under the fig tree' before Philip called him. This detail, unknown to any human witness, demonstrates divine omniscience. The fig tree may have been Nathanael's place of private prayer or Scripture meditation. Jesus sees into hidden places and knows us intimately before we know Him.

Historical Context

Sitting under one's fig tree was a common metaphor for peace, security, and particularly Torah study (Micah 4:4, Zechariah 3:10). Rabbis often taught under trees. Jesus' knowledge of this private moment convinced Nathanael of Jesus' supernatural identity. The Lord knows our hidden devotion as well as our hidden sins.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' supernatural knowledge of Nathanael affect your understanding of Christ's omniscience?
2. What 'fig tree' moments of private devotion might Jesus have witnessed in your life?

Interlinear Text

λέγει	αὐτῷ	Ναθαναήλ	Πόθεν	με	γινώσκεις	ἀπεκρίθη		
saith	unto him	Nathanael	Whence	me	knowest thou	answered		
G3004	G846	G3482	G4159	G3165	G1097	G611		
ό	Ἰησοῦς	καὶ	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ	Πρὸ	τοῦ	σε	Φίλιππον
G3588	Jesus	and	said	unto him	Before	G3588	thee	that Philip
	G2424	G2532	G2036	G846	G4253		G4571	G5376
φωνῆσαι	ὄντα	ὑπὸ	τὴν	συκῆν	εἶδόν	σε		
called	when thou wast	under	G3588	the fig tree	I saw	thee		
G5455	G5607	G5259		G4808	G1492	G4571		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 65:24 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

John 2:25 (Parallel theme): And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Matthew 6:6 (Parallel theme): But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.