



## St Bartholomew 24<sup>th</sup> August 2025

**8.30 am and 11 am**

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In the ancient lists of the Twelve Apostles Bartholemew always comes after Philip and before Matthew<sup>i</sup>.

His name 'Bartholemew' means 'Son of Talmay' and, traditionally, Bartholemew has been identified with Nathanael, who, according to St John's Gospel came from Cana in Galilee<sup>ii</sup> where Jesus' first miracle took place at a marriage feast after the wine had, very embarrassingly, run out. <sup>iii</sup>

Nathanael, Son of Talmy, comes to Jesus at the invitation of Philip, when Philip tells him that he had found "*the One about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*"<sup>iv</sup>

Although, at first, the rather opinionated Nathanael argues that the Messiah couldn't *possibly* come from such an out of the way place as Nazareth<sup>v</sup>, Philip invites him to "Come and See!"<sup>vi</sup> for himself and Nathanael does just that; he sets his prejudices aside for a moment, comes to Jesus, and is caught up in Jesus' gracious

invitation and loving welcome and joins the inner-band of the disciples.

Nathanael allows himself to be surprised; to find God where he least expects to find anything – let alone God's Messiah.

Everyone needs that invitation to 'come and see Jesus' for themselves and perhaps people need that personal invitation more now than ever before.

Perhaps today's equivalent of 'Can anything good come from Nazareth?' might be 'Can anything good come from the Church of God in Christ Jesus and those who belong to it - seeing that it is full of corruption and sexual predators?

Well, 'come and see!', must be our invitation to everyone, so that they can, like Nathanael Bartholemew, put aside their prejudices and come and see for themselves.

'Come and see what a difference Jesus makes in the lives of the people who claim to follow him'!

'Come and see what a difference Jesus makes in the communities which have a Church at their heart'!

'Come see what a difference Jesus makes in education and healthcare'!

'Come and see for themselves what being embraced in God's invitation in Jesus feels like'!

'Come and see' with what the poet R S Thomas has called "faith green as a leaf."<sup>vii</sup>

Like Bartholemew, people need first-hand experience of the difference Jesus can make to someone's life; of the difference Jesus makes to other people's lives through the Church living out its servant faith in the grace and gentle power of the Holy Spirit.

Singing hymns, performing beautiful liturgy is simply not enough. If people are to 'come and see', *what* they see has to be authentic, has to have valency; the optics have to be right – the lived 'outcomes', the KPIs, if you like, of being with Jesus have to be authentic, not 'pie in the sky when we die' stuff! If that's *all* that we or the Church has to offer – it really isn't enough!

Philip had seen Jesus, spent time with him, and then he had to go and find someone else to invite. That someone was Bartholomew and having seen Jesus for himself, then spent the rest of his life inviting people to 'come and see', just as Philip had invited him.

Bartholmew's heart is moved when he meets Jesus', he finds himself understood and known by Jesus as if for the very first time, and in turn he comes to know that he has indeed met the Messiah<sup>viii</sup>.

And so, it has gone on from generation to generation: someone hearing and seeing what difference Jesus has made to someone else's life going on to tell someone else.

We have no precise information about the post-biblical story of Nathanael Bartholomew's apostolic ministry. According to Eusebius<sup>ix</sup>, writing in the late second century, Bartholemew preached the Gospel as far as India<sup>x</sup> like his fellow Apostle, Thomas.

Later mediaeval tradition says that Bartholemew met his death by being flayed alive. If you want to see more of that, then visit the Parish Church of St Bartholemew the Great in Smithfield, where you can see Damian Hurst's great golden statue of Bartholemew holding up his draped skin which looks like a rather magnificent onesie!

All we really need to know about Nathanael bar Talmay, is that from a sceptical, suspicious start he went to Jesus "just to have look" because someone invited him to, and that, from that moment on, Bartholemew would go on inviting others to come and meet Jesus, even to his last breath.

May God give us the grace we need to open ourselves to eternal friendship with Jesus, and never tire of inviting others to come and see for themselves!

---

<sup>i</sup> Matthew 10:1–4

<sup>ii</sup> John 1.46 & John 21.2

<sup>iii</sup> Jn 2: 1-11

<sup>iv</sup> Jn 1: 45

<sup>v</sup> Jn 1: 46

<sup>vi</sup> *ibid*

<sup>vii</sup> Thomas, R. S., *The Kingdom*

<sup>viii</sup> John 1.49

<sup>ix</sup> AD 260/265 – 30<sup>th</sup> May AD 339

<sup>x</sup> Eusebius, *History of the Church*

