

Nathanael's Question (John 1:43–51)

Nathaniel: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (1:46). — Philip: "Come and see."

Describe the question and the answer, usually beginning with a mostly blank worksheet. (Here the answers are shown.)

Q. NATHANAEL'S QUESTION WAS . . .

. . Negative and Skeptical

- . . skeptical about Nazareth
 - . . an example of negative "group-think"
 - . . probably based on well-known negatives about Nazareth
- . . skeptical about Jesus of Nazareth
 - . . based on ignorance, rather than on facts

. . Properly Cautious and Honest

- . . cautious about messianic claims (1:45, 10:8)
 - . . cautious, but not scoffing
 - . . not like Pilate's question in 18:38
- . . a question rather than a statement
 - . . tentative, not totally negative
 - . . less firm than Thomas' negative statement in 20:25
 - . . not rebuked by the Lord (1:47)

A. PHILIP'S ANSWER WAS . . .

. . Christ-Centered

- . . pointing to the Messiah, evangelistic
- . . not a needless defense of Nazareth
- . . not critical of Nathaniel for being skeptical

. . Short but Effective

- . . an effective invitation
- . . not filled with vain arguments
- . . not repeating what he said before in 1:45
- . . followed by Jesus' longer and miraculous answer

★ SUMMARY & APPLICATIONS

What are the main things that should be said about the question and the answer? What should we do in response?

Nathanael's question was properly cautious.

- . . So we should be properly cautious about the biblical teaching we hear.

Philip's answer was Christ-centered.

- . . So we should point people to the Lord himself, avoiding needless arguments.

