

St. Bartholomew – August 24 (2026)

- Have you ever suspected one of your employees was stealing from you?
- Have you been the target of an online scam
- Do you need to locate someone

If so, you need to hire a detective.

- They ask a lot of questions
- They are not fooled by unreliable witnesses
- They don't rely on assumptions
- They are on the lookout for hard evidence

Nathanael, traditionally identified with the apostle called Bartholomew, would have been a good detective.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts list Bartholomew as one of the 12 Apostles, but only John, who has no list in his Gospel, mentions a "Nathanael" but not a Bartholomew.

As today's reading begins, Philip—fresh from his own invitation to follow Jesus—rushes to Nathanael with astonishing news. He announces that they have found the One foretold by Moses and the prophets: Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.

Like Philip, Nathanael had long awaited such a promise. Yet he could not imagine that the Messiah would come from Nazareth. His skepticism is understandable; Nazareth was not a place from which anyone expected greatness.

Perhaps he wondered whether Philip's enthusiasm had carried him a bit too far. Philip simply invites him: come and see.

As Nathanael approaches, Jesus greets him as a true child of Israel—someone honest, direct, and without guile. Nathanael is startled that Jesus seems to know his heart so well.

Then Jesus tells him something even more remarkable: He saw Nathanael under the fig tree before Philip ever spoke to him.

In Scripture, the fig tree often symbolizes Israel—capable of bearing both good fruit and bad. Jesus' words suggest that He sees Nathanael not only physically, but spiritually. He knows the fruit of Nathanael's heart.

At this, Nathanael's doubts fall away. He responds with three titles of faith: Rabbi, Son of God, and King of Israel. He now agrees with Philip that this man from Nazareth is indeed the One promised by Moses and the prophets.

From this moment on, everything Nathanael witnesses in the presence of Jesus confirms and strengthens his faith that something very good—far better than he ever imagined—has indeed come from Nazareth.