

# Come and See

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*No recording was taken on of this sermon. The following is not a transcript of what was spoken, but an adaptation of the preparatory notes.*

This morning we continue our journey through the story of Jesus according to John. If you have a Bible with you please open to the gospel of John 1. If you are using the pew Bible it's about page 860.

*Let's pray and ask the Lord to speak to us now through His Word*

**John 1:35** The next day John was there again with two of his disciples.

When are we talking about here? John the Gospel writer is telling us about how things first got started with Jesus, his public debut.

## **Day 1**

It started with John the Baptizer out in the wilderness. He was teaching and preaching and baptizing people in the Jordan River. And then one day the Jewish leaders sent a delegation from Jerusalem out to John to check him out, to ask him some questions. They wanted to know who he was, and if he was claiming to be the Messiah, or a prophet foretold long ago.

As we've already seen, John denied that he was anything more than voice sent from God to prepare the way for His coming.

## **Day 2**

The day after that delegation had been sent, Jesus emerged from the crowds and was baptized by John in the Jordan River. It was that day that John began to point the crowds and those who were "following" him to Jesus. We heard John's testimony of how the Spirit came down and remained upon Jesus.

## **Day 3**

Well, it's the day after that, that what we read about this morning in verse 35 where this takes place...

**John 1:35** The next day John was there again with two of his disciples.

So there John is again the next day, standing, we imagine out in the River, and this time John tells us that 2 of the Baptizer's disciples or followers were there with him.

**1:36** When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

So again the next day, John's out at the River, and Jesus comes by, and as he comes by...John *again* begins to point to him, and declare: "Behold!" "Look!" "The Lamb of God!" Imagine all of the people all of a sudden in that moment turning to look at Jesus as he walks by...

**John 1:37** When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. **38** Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

So we might imagine Jesus as he passes by, and then continues on his way, and then finally these two disciples of John get up and go after Jesus, and they're following him. We imagine, a little ways from the crowd, Jesus is walking along, and these two disciples of John are following him. And Jesus turns and sees them following. We imagine He gives them a moment to catch up, and then asks them this question: "What do you want?" Now we have to be careful here that we don't read a tone a voice into this that's not here...We don't know just what Jesus' tone of voice was...but he asks them a simple question: What do you want? Literally: "What do you seek?" What are you after? What are you looking for?

These are the first words out of Jesus mouth in John's gospel. What do you seek? On the one hand these words are so natural. They're the words you would say to *any* stranger who you see running up behind you...But on the other hand...there is likely a whole deeper level to this simple question...What do you seek?

This question probes down to the level of motives and desires...the very reason they are following him in the first place...which goes back to John the Baptizer and what He has been saying about Jesus. Can you imagine the two disciples in that moment...like... "what do we say to him?" We want to know: Are you the Messiah? Does John speak the truth? We think He does...and so here we are... with a sheepish grin on their faces? Like what do we say?

I imagine that these two disciples are feeling kind of like how we might feel if we went over to a new neighbour's house, someone who is a complete stranger to us, and knocked on their door. And the first thing they say is "Hello..?" Like, "Hi, can I help you?" And that strange feeling comes over you as you try and explain your purpose, and why you've come knocking on the door of someone you don't know.

**John 1:38** They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

So what's their answer, what do they seek? They don't immediately disclose the full reasons they have for following Jesus; rather they express a simple desire to know a little more about him, "We'd like to get your contact info...if it's alright. Where are you staying?"

They also take care in this moment to address Jesus with respect. They call him "Rabbi". A title used to honour religious teachers of the day. "Rabbi, where are you staying?"

**John 1:39** "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

Jesus invites them to come along, and again, such simple words, but we can't help but wondering if Jesus doesn't have a twinkle in his eye...knowing that they will see more than just where he is staying.

**John 1:39** So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

They went and stayed with Jesus, at the place he was staying, and they spent what remained of the day with Him. Wouldn't it be awesome to have a full recording of all that they did and talked about with one another? What did they ask him? What did they say? What did Jesus say to them?

But while we don't hear what they talked about, we do hear what at least one of them came to say as a result of his day with Jesus:

**John 1:40** Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup> The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). <sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus.

So after spending part of the day with Jesus, Andrew, one of the two who had followed Jesus that day goes straight away to find his brother Simon. And what does Andrew tell him, he tells him what he really thought after spending a day with Jesus: "We have found the Messiah!"

Now those are quite the words to say! As a people, Israel has been waiting for centuries upon centuries for God's Anointed One...and not just any anointed King to take the throne...but for *the* Anointed One! *The* ultimate One! The great One! For God's promised King spoken about by the prophets of old! The One who would come and turn this world upside-down!

We don't know exactly what Andrew's conception of the Messiah was...but can you imagine the excitement in that moment as he speaks to his brother Simon, and tells him the news! "We have found the Messiah." The One! And he brings Simon to Jesus.

42 And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephass” (which, when translated, is Peter ).

John tells us only one thing about this encounter that Peter has with Jesus. Jesus re-names him. He tells him who he is, and then he tells him who he will be from now on: Peter.

So what a day it’s been for these 3 men! Two of them spent a part of the day with Jesus, the One whom John has been pointing to. And by the end of it, Andrew, one of them is telling his brother Peter to come and meet the *Messiah*! Their hearts and minds must have been going that day, and filled with excitement!

**John 1:43** The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

**John 1:44** Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.

So the day after all this Jesus decides to go into Galilee. And sometime that day he “finds Philip”. And the sense of it is almost as if Jesus went looking for him. It’s the same word that was used about Andrew going and finding Peter. So it seems that Jesus actually seeks out Philip, and tells Philip to follow him.

John tells us in 44 that Philip was another guy from the town of Bethsaida, the same town where Andrew and Peter were living.

It doesn’t really say what Philip and Jesus did together, or what they talked about...but Philip became convinced in short order that Jesus was someone special! We see this in what Philip does:

45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

We all know that feeling don’t we?! Something amazing and wonderful happens, and when it does we can’t just keep it to ourselves we have to tell someone! We have to share the news with the people we love most, our family, our friends!

And that’s what Philip does...After just a short time with Jesus, he goes and finds his buddy Nathanael. And what does he say to him? “We have found the One that Moses wrote about in the Law!” I mean this is huge! Feel the weight of these words! Moses lived not quite 1500 years ago! We have found the One that He wrote about:

Probably Referring to Deut. 18 - *The Prophet*. The One. The One who would be like Moses and stand in the gap between God and the people, giving the people God's Words.

**Deut. 18:15** **The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.** **16** For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die."

**Deut. 18:17** The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. **18** **I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.**

But not only does Philip call Jesus "the One that Moses wrote about in the Law"...he also says to Nathaniel that He's the One the prophets wrote about too! Feel the weight of those words! It's prophets plural! And there were many prophets who said many things about the coming One.

Let's just take one quick example:

God spoke through the prophet Micah these words:

**Mic. 5:2** "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times."  
**3** Therefore Israel will be abandoned  
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,  
and the rest of his brothers return  
to join the Israelites.  
**4** He will stand and shepherd his flock  
in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they will live securely, for then his greatness  
will reach to the ends of the earth.

This is just one of many words which the prophets wrote about the Messiah, and many of these words they wrote end with this huge all-encompassing glorious kingdom. We looked at a couple of them last week...the Branch of Jesse who will judge with righteousness...the servant of the LORD who will bring justice to the nations.

All of these things feed into this grand expectation of the Messiah...and here is Philip telling his buddy Nathanael “We have found the One described in these prophetic words of God through the centuries!” You can just imagine Nathanael’s unrecorded response? “Oh...who is he?!”

“He’s Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” This is pretty much the standard way of referring to people back then in Jewish culture. But let’s remember that Jesus is a standard name back then. In fact, Jesus comes from the Greek *Iesous*, which is the Greek equivalent of Jesus’ actual name *Yehoshua* - which going straight from Hebrew to English is Joshua. So there were lots of guys named that back then. Philip is saying...this One...the Messiah...he’s *Yehoshua* from the town of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathaniel’s response is sharp.

**John 1:46** “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

I guess Nazareth had a bit of a reputation! But Philip doesn’t miss a beat...

“Come and see,” said Philip.

He says, “Come and see.” I’m not going to convince you right here and now, you come and see for yourself, and you’ll see what I mean!

So Nathanael agrees to go.

**John 1:47** When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “**Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.**”

So Nathanael is just approaching Jesus with Philip, and Jesus seeing him...makes a remark about Nathanael. Jesus says, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

What does Jesus mean by that? I don’t think he means to flatter ...Neither do I think he means that Nathanael is pure, sinless, or has never spoken a lie. I think Jesus simply means to say that Nathanael is the real deal. He’s genuine. He’s not putting on a show for others to see. He’s generally a person of integrity. A person who says what he means, and means what he says.

But how does Nathanael feel about this greeting. Let’s not forget...Jesus is a stranger to him. They never met before or had any kind of relationship. What does Nathanael say in response?

**John 1:48** “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

There's a probably lot in his question...He doesn't disagree with Jesus' assessment. Instead he asks, how did you come to know this about the *kind* of person I am? Now I'm not sure what Nathanael expected Jesus to say...Philip told me about you...or I've heard about you from so-and-so.

But Jesus of course doesn't say any of those things...He says,

... "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

Nathanael's response is surprising...he declares right there, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

You can almost hear Jesus chuckle as he says these next words:

**John 1:50** Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." <sup>51</sup> He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."

So what just happened here? Nathanael just went from skeptical at best, "Hmph...a guy named Jesus from Nazareth?" To "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

What made the difference? What convinced skeptical Nathanael? This one thing Jesus said to him, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you."

And the questions abound here...What is Jesus talking about? What was Nathanael *doing* under the fig tree? We don't know! And perhaps that's the reason why the sudden change in Nathanael...perhaps nobody knew what he was doing under the fig tree but him...perhaps it was a moment in which he was alone, a moment where no one was watching.

The point is...this Jesus who was not there bodily in any sense...knew, he saw me doing something when there was no one around to see...and it's something he could only know if he possessed some supernatural ability to see things beyond what his physical eyes could see. Something he would only know if He *was* indeed the One spoken of long ago through Moses and the prophets...

And I love what Jesus says to him after this...You ain't seen nothing yet Nathanael! You were skeptical...you were going to need some serious proof...just wait...you're going to see greater things than that! In fact, you will see things that will blow your mind!

Things such as Jacob saw...when he had his dream of a stairway to heaven...

Now this statement of Jesus is very strange... “Truly, truly, I tell you (plural), you will see heaven having been opened and the angels of God going up and coming down upon the son of Man.”

What did Jesus mean by this statement?

Of course Jesus is referring to the dream that Jacob had when he was fleeing from his brother Esau, and leaving the promised land. Jacob had a dream in which the LORD revealed himself to Jacob, and what Jacob saw was a stairway from earth to heaven, and angels going up and down upon it. The LORD spoke to him there and confirmed the covenant promises to Jacob in that vision.

Jesus is very clearly referring to that...but what does he mean by it? That his disciples will see the same thing that Jacob saw? A great vision in which the LORD reveals himself to them? There’s one key difference in how Jesus refers to this vision of Jacob. He says that they will see what Jacob saw, but the key difference is that he says that they will see the angels going up and down upon the Son of Man, rather than a stairway.

This is strange, indeed...What are they to picture here? Angels going up and coming down from heaven on a stairway that’s a person? Very strange indeed. But I think it’s a clue that we are meant to take Jesus’ words metaphorically. He is the Son of Man. Which we see quite plainly in other places where he very clearly refers to himself as the Son of Man. So Jesus is telling them that they will see what Jacob saw, only instead of them seeing a stairway bridging the gap between heaven and earth, they will see Him, Jesus as the One bridging the gap between heaven and earth. This is quite the thing to say, and to whet their appetites with!

The conclusions that Jacob came to after his vision of the stairway to heaven was that God, the LORD, Yahweh is in this place, and I did not even know it.

**Gen. 28:16** When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” **17** He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”

I think a part of what Jesus means is that his disciples will come to a similar realization, that the disciples will soon see that God, the LORD, himself is among them, and they at first did not even know it.



Jacob came to name that place Bethel, house of God. Because it was the place where heaven touched earth, and where God dwelled here on earth...the very gate of heaven. What Jesus has come to help them see is that something even greater has happened...that in a similar yet different way heaven has touched earth again, and God is here dwelling among them...the gate of heaven is here...but it's not the place where Jacob laid his head anymore...it's that He is here walking around and living among them in the person of Jesus, though they do not yet realize it. And as we will see later on in John's gospel Jesus will make it crystal clear when he says, "I am the way...to the Father" (John 14:6). He has come to bridge the gap between heaven and earth, and Jesus' promise is that truly you will all see this spiritual reality unfold in front of your very eyes.

And you will see that, truly, says Jesus to his disciples...you will see that this is who I am! And that's so much more than just knowing where you were Nathanael earlier today when seemingly no one was watching.

These are amazing things to have on record about Jesus' first encounters with his disciples. The big question in all of their minds those days, was simply: "Is he the One?" "Is He the Messiah?" "Who is this Jesus that John is pointing to?"

One by one as they encountered him personally, spent time with him. Talked with Him...they came very quickly to say, "He is the One!" He is the Messiah! He is the One whom Moses wrote about...who the Prophets wrote about! You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel.

Did they *fully* understand who Jesus was? Not yet... The other gospels show that they didn't. But they were on the right track...they had found the very tip of the iceberg...they had scratched the surface of this gold vein.

And what I love is how Jesus lets them know that this is just the beginning...just wait...you will see that I am even more than this...

What did John the Apostle say back at the beginning of all this, he said, "We saw his glory! The glory of the one and Only Son from the Father..." (John 1:14)

So why is John telling us this story? Why has he written all this down?

Because he wants you to "Come with him" and "See for yourself" just who this Jesus was and is. This is John's invitation to all who read...to us...more than that...this is *God's* invitation to us today... "Come and you will see" Skeptical? "Come and see". Look at and listen to what Jesus has to say to you for yourself! "Behold, he, Jesus, is the Lamb of God!" "We have found

the Messiah!" "We have found the One written about in the Law of Moses and by the Prophets!" the Son of God! The King of Israel!

Come, and you will see! And as Jesus himself said that day...seeing and believing these things...that's just the beginning, you will see greater things than these. You will truly see that in Me the LORD has come to dwell among you, heaven has been opened, and the way from earth to heaven is right here...it's Me!

We cannot ourselves follow Jesus around on foot like the disciples did that day. Nor can we look him in the eye and ask him a question like "Where are you staying?" He's not here in the flesh among us as he was that day among the disciples.

But we can still in a sense come and see, by simply reading the story of Jesus again. We can pray and ask to know more about him, and he hears us. Do you want to see greater things of Jesus than you have in the past? They are written here for us to read and see for ourselves. I want to invite and remind you of this simple prayer that anyone can pray before sitting down to read about Jesus, the prayer that Moses prayed: "Lord, show me your glory." "God, show me your glory."

If you come to God humbly with that prayer, and open His Word, you will see.

Finally I must say a word about sharing what we have found to be true of Jesus with others. I love the way that Andrew and Philip do this with brother and friend. They are excited about Jesus. And they are not ashamed of Him. They go and find those they love and they tell them the simple truth about what they have seen through their own relationship with Jesus. We've found the Messiah! We've found the One!

Oh that God would work in us, so that we might bear witness like they did to our family, friends, and neighbours. It doesn't matter if they are skeptical, or seemingly unlikely...our job is not to change their hearts, but simply to invite them to come and see. Here, take this Bible, and read it! Take this DVD and watch it! Check this video out on my Facebook page! We have found someone special whom God has sent into our world, and we're excited about this!

And even if you don't believe, we do, and we're going to follow Him, because we've found the Messiah, the King, the Son, the Way, the Truth, the Life. And so my hope and prayer is that this simple story about sharing the good news, what little they understood of it will stir us all to think again about who we know that we can share it with and who our Lord truly is. This is cause for joy no matter what we are going through. We have found the Messiah.