



**Come And See
Jesus Begins His Ministry
John 1:35 – 51**

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We're studying the book of John and are in chapter 1. We have learned that this book is all about Jesus being God and as we have already learned, that is where John begins the book.

Since it is all about that, John also presents witnesses to that fact and the first witness he gives us is John the Baptist. We learned the "how to" from him last time.

Where are we in the overall timeline of Jesus' ministry? He has already been baptized (anointed for ministry) and has just returned from the being in the wilderness for 40 days. John made his announcement to the world on the day Jesus came in from the wilderness. It is now the very next day.

Our text for today will cover the first few days of the ministry of Jesus.

Open your Bibles to the book of John and let's read our text for today together. John 1:35 – 51.

John 1:35–51

"Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What are you seeking?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will



see." So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day; it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). The next day He decided to go to Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses wrote in the Law, and the prophets also wrote: Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth!" Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good be from Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite, in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (NASB 2020)

We begin the following day after Jesus returned from the wilderness. He had already broken the 40 days fast while still in the wilderness when angels came and provided for Him (Matthew 4:11).

Jesus is back with a mission to accomplish, and He is not going to waste any time getting to it.

Meanwhile, John the Baptist is still doing what he was called to do, he is faithfully being a witness. Jesus is here and His ministry is beginning. For John the Baptist, it is time to introduce some of the folks following him, to who they should really be following. They trust John, so John provides the introduction.

The calling here in John is different than the calling we see in Matthew and Mark. Yes, that is indeed the case and there is no conflict. Here, they are meeting Jesus for the very first time. In fact, He will only call one of the five we see Him talking to and that is Phillip.

Again, remember, John is providing witnesses for us. At this point, there are no crowds or miracles or public teaching. It is entirely possible that what we see elsewhere in the scripture is the Lord calling those who He met earlier but had gone back to their lives. To be a disciple in Israel met a change in life, and the way Jesus did it was, well, very different.

Here is the thing, normally "there is one common characteristic: individuals sought out a religious leader or guru; the guru did not peremptorily call individuals to follow him as disciples." (Meier 2001, 53)

When Jesus calls, He is creating a new template to follow. He is the one seeking, not the other way around. The usual procedure was for the would-be student to seek out the rabbi, and we do see a bit of that here. But Jesus will turn it totally around when he calls them to follow Him post fishing trip.

When Jesus calls His disciples to Him, His peremptory call to follow was open-ended not only geographically but also temporally. It did not set any time limit on the obligation to follow him. There was no course of studies, the completion of which would release a disciple from constant attendance upon Jesus. Becoming a disciple of Jesus was not a temporary appointment, after which the disciple could hope to be promoted to equality with Jesus as a younger colleague." (Meier 2001, 55)

Luke 19:10

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (NET 2nd ed.)

For those of us who are His disciples today, this still holds. He sought us through the Holy Spirit, we responded, and now we are in, forever.



We never cease being disciples, we are always learning more about the one we are following, Jesus Christ. We will be spending an eternity learning about Him and from Him.

Here in John, we are about to learn a bit of the process of becoming disciples that still takes place today.

Jesus' particular form of discipleship still defies classification according to other existing first-century A.D. paradigms. In the following ways Jesus developed a unique form of discipleship that was inaugurated with his announcement of the arrival of the kingdom of God and summoning men and women to be his followers. (Wilkins 2013, 205)

That was new. Men and women.

What we see here is John the Baptist talking with some of his disciples, and they see the one he had announced the day before. It is only logical for the one who has already stated publicly that he is simply the introducer to begin referring his disciples to the one who has always existed.

He is standing there, talking with two of his disciples and pointing to Jesus tells these two young men what he said the day before, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" We know one of them is Andrew, the other we think is John. Without going to deeply into why I say young men, there is a custom in the culture of the time.

A young man's discipleship training under a rabbi would usually begin between the ages of 13 and 15. If this pattern was consistent with the followers of Jesus, some of them may have joined Jesus as early as age 13 and would have still been teenagers at the time of His death, resurrection, and ascension. Though the Bible does not give the exact ages of the disciples of Jesus, it is likely they were all between the ages of 13 and 30 at the time they followed Jesus. (Got Questions Ministries 2014-2021)

These two young men turned and just simply started to follow Jesus. For how long, we are not told. Jesus hears the footsteps, stops and turns around. The first words He says in John is the question that He continues to ask us today, "What are you seeking?" What is it that we are looking for when we come to Jesus, what is it we hope to find?

This is God asking. God asks all of us, "What are you looking for?" The first words from God are direct and to the point.

These two young men obviously wanted to know more simply based on what John had said to them. They had entered into discovery mode which ultimately leads to a decision.

This is no different than all of us and our stories of how we came to Jesus. We may have been listening to a message or someone sharing with us or the radio or a podcast, and the Holy Spirit asks us, "What are you looking for?" Where did that come from?

I know when I first realized that the message, I was listening to was talking to me, I tried to ignore it. But the Holy Spirit was persistent. I finally determined that what I was seeking was not to go to hell.

When we realize the question has been asked, some decide immediately, others take some time, but most put it off or forget the question was ever asked.

The two young men who were asked this question by Jesus had been raised well. They deferred to Jesus with the title of Teacher, showing respect and recognition that He is a teacher, but they had never heard Him teach, preach or say a word until He asked, "What are you seeking?" He didn't say who, He said what. When asked why they were following Jesus, they then asked if they could continue their inquiry and politely asked if they could follow Him today in a manner that is culturally appropriate.



The “Where do you live” question is a cultural way in Israel of the time of inviting Jesus to invite them home, since disciples sometimes stayed with their teacher. This is a roundabout way of telling Jesus that their interested, they’re in discovery phase, but not ready to make a serious commitment just yet. That is coming.

Jesus invites them with the same words He invites those who seek Him today, “Come and you will see.” “The act of faith goes first: knowledge is placed definitely after. The double repetition, So they came and saw, must be noticed.” (Westcott and Westcott 1908, 24)

Did you see how Jesus answered? He promised nothing and revealed nothing. He has shifted the initiative back to the two young men. He is inviting relationship; it is their call though. They have reached the second decision point. Do I want to know more about this?

Jesus still is doing the same today. He has already done everything for us on the cross dying and then rising from the dead. He offers abundant life. The Holy Spirit asks us what are we seeking. We keep looking, sometimes not intentionally, but the Holy Spirit just won’t let go. We want to know more, what is this going to cost me.

That is when the Holy Spirit says, “Come and see.” Just as the two future disciples had to decide, do I go further with Him, we do too. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He doesn’t force us if we are not willing to listen. So, there is this invitation, I wanted to know more about how to avoid hell, so the invitation is the same as we read here.

Free will comes into play. It truly is our decision, but God already knows what decision you and I will make. Come and see.

If you haven't yet made up your mind, then you have decided there is more to learn and indeed, there is more the Holy Spirit wants us to know. His goal is to bring us to a decision point to follow Jesus. But once this process begins, the decision cannot be put off. Waiting to decide may be a seriously wrong decision as none of us know if we even have a tomorrow.

2 Corinthians 6:2

“Hear what God says: “When the time came for me to show you favour I heard you; when the day arrived for me to save you, I helped you.” Listen! This is the hour to receive God’s favour; today is the day to be saved!” (GNB)

The invitation is to come and see. If you hear that question being directed to you today, then keep listening. I promise you that as we continue you are going to discover some truth that will change your life forever. I made the decision that yes, I want to know more.

Andrew and the other young man with him, possibly John, had only heard of the reputation of Jesus from John the Baptist. They trusted John. So now they wanted to discover more for themselves.

These first few potential disciples who are asking and deciding whether to go all in “are characterized by initiative and willingness to examine claims they have heard concerning this silent one. Most importantly, they are not put off by his silence, nor do they seek to break it. Rather they are humbly receptive, seeking only to be where Jesus is staying.” (Whitacre 1999, 71)

Since it was late, 4 in the afternoon, the two decide to stay where Jesus was for the evening, most likely a camp site there along the Jordan.

Andrew had come to see John the Baptist along with his older brother, Simon Peter. Before settling in for the evening, he went and found his brother and brought him to where Jesus was staying.



That is a pretty normal thing to do. I have just met someone who John the Baptist pointed out to me and called “the Lamb of God.” You need to meet Him too. So off Andrew goes.

We do not know what else was said by Jesus, at this point all we know is what John the Baptist said and the question and answer regarding his camping spot. But Andrew heard enough to tell his brother that they had found the Messiah.

We need to remember that at that point in time, most of Israel was looking for the one who they thought, would free them from the tyranny of Rome. Messianic fervor was in full swing at the time.

After all Peter and Andrew may have been witnesses (Acts 1:22) to the events that had taken place when Jesus went to see John the Baptist and was baptized, rather anointed for service, by him before going into the wilderness for 40 days.

One other thing about Andrew, “he continues to appear in this Gospel as one who introduces the resources or interest of others to Jesus (6:8–9; 12:22.)” (Keener 2012, 475)

For the Jewish people a Messiah was expected from Old Testament prophecy; he was the expected deliverer who would be anointed by God to vindicate God’s people and destroy their enemies. (Osborne 2018, 52-53)

There was no connection being made by those in Israel at the time that Messiah would be the suffering servant seen in Isaiah 53. Telling his brother Peter that he had found the Messiah, was enough to bring the fisherman to Jesus. He remembered what he had seen a couple of months ago.

John 1:42

“He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).” (NASB 2020)

When Jesus looked at Peter, it was much more than a glance. The word ἐμβλέψας (emblepsas) means to look at something directly and therefore intently, look at, gaze on. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 321)

He sees Peter and looks beyond the outward and sees what he will be in the future, and He gives him another name. Rocky.

Jesus on the basis of his foreknowledge gave Simon his true name that portended his destiny as the rock of the church...In actuality, this spoke not only of Simon’s future as Peter but also of the messianic authority Jesus possessed in giving him that new name. (Osborne 2018, 53)

There is much more to come but this is a first meeting and Peter, like his brother, now has a lot to consider, especially since he is also married.

So, morning comes, time to break camp.

John 1:43–46

“The next day He decided to go to Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses wrote in the Law, and the prophets also wrote: Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth!” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good be from Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”” (NASB 2020)

Jesus returned from the wilderness two days ago. He has rested, refreshed and began putting together a team. So, with the new day, time to travel to Galilee, which means heading north as Bethsaida is on the north shore of Galilee, just east of Capernaum.



Why did Jesus go to Galilee? Was it on the way or was there some other reason. Jesus never does anything without a reason. He has come to Galilee to meet someone, a very specific someone. He could have gone past, but He didn't.

We are not told what Philip was doing that day or how Jesus knew about him. But Jesus goes to Galilee to find Philip. We are not told why. All we know is he is from the same town Andrew and Peter are originally from.

When Jesus finds Him, intentionally seeking him out, the conversation consists of two words, "Follow me."

Our English translation loses in it what it is Jesus is saying to Philip. The Greek word is Ἀκολουθεῖ (akolouthei). Yes, this verb does carry the meaning with it "to follow someone as a disciple, be a disciple, follow." (Arndt, et al. 2000, 36)

Here, when Jesus says this to Philip, He says it in the present active imperative verbal form. Imperative means this is not a suggestion but rather a command. And the present tense with the active voice has the idea behind it of follow and keep on following and never stop following.

This word also carries with it "the meaning of cleaving steadfastly to one and conforming to his example." (Vincent 1887, 74)

This is not a simple, follow me I'll show you how to live, this is more along the lines of follow me and become like me and never stop following me.

Jesus us the one who calls Philip. When Jesus calls, it is not an option, it is a command. When Jesus calls, it is to a lifestyle change and one that will involve hardship following Jesus no matter where He goes.

When Jesus calls us to "follow Him." It has the same impact as when He called Philip. This is a serious invitation, this is more than simply being a learner, this is now a challenge to follow so closely that you are willing to be where He is and suffer whatever He suffers.

John 1:44–45

"Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses wrote in the Law, and the prophets also wrote: Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth!" (NASB 2020)

There is some humor in this statement. Jesus found Philip, it was His initiative and His alone that resulted in the calling of Philip. But look what Philip tells Nathanael. Philip finds Nathanael and tells him "We have found...". Right.

Who is really finding whom? Have you ever heard someone tell you how their life changed after they "found" Christ?

As fallen people, we are interested in who gets the credit. The reality though is here in verse 43, He found Philip.

He found you and He found me. "Who really finds whom? Christians have frequently been known to say that they found Christ or found faith as Andrew and Philip reported, but maybe Jesus' perspective in these stories could profitably alter such a self-centered view of salvation. It was not Jesus who was lost!" (Borchert 1996, 146)

Paul gives us the straight truth; we were not even looking.



Romans 5:6–8

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.” (NRSVue)

What was the impact on Philip of being called to follow Jesus? “We know little about Philip. We know he became one of the Twelve (Mark 3:18), but John is the only Gospel that describes his actions at all (6:5–7; 12:21–22; 14:7–9).” (Osborne 2018, 54)

Jesus specifically searches for and finds Philip, then commands him to join them and begin a lifetime of following Him. Here is the thing, Philip does and immediately looks up Nathanael to tell him.

He tells Nathanael that Jesus is the one predicted by Moses, He is the prophet, He is Messiah. Philip names who this person is, He is “the long-expected Messiah and the main character in the present story: “Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth.”” (Michaels 2010, 128)

John 1:46–49

“Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good be from Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite, in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel!”” (NASB 2020)

Now Nathanael had had some religious training. Philip had really focused on Jesus having come from Nazareth, but Nathanael knows his Bible. How could Messiah come from such an insignificant place like Nazareth? The city is not referenced in the OT at all.

Here is the thing we can learn; Philip has confronted a skeptic who is not accepting what he is saying. At this point, Philip is not a highly educated believer ready with all of the answers. He only knows what he has heard and seen and right now, that isn’t a whole lot.

But he is faithful. He met someone who has changed his life forever. He has his story of what Jesus did for him.

He has been challenged about his newfound faith with snide remarks about the town that Jesus came from. He does not debate, he does not argue, he doesn’t even hit him with scripture, because all he has is his story.

He does all that he knows to do, he invites him to come with him. Come and see this one who has so changed me. Exam the evidence, take a look for yourself and make a conclusion based on the facts.

This invitation made by Philip is the same made by Jesus and still echoes throughout the world today.

For all who have heard about Jesus and have some issues with the claims of salvation. Come and see. Be honest with the evidence and with your questions and take a look.

Philip is like every new believer who doesn’t have all the answers, but he does know what Jesus has done for him. Your story of what Jesus has done for you is difficult for even the most educated skeptic to refute, since it is your experience and individual to you. In our culture today, it is “your truth.” Inviting someone to come and see is simply inviting them to examine what you did and find out for themselves what the truth is. That means being honest enough to set aside preconceived notions and look at the evidence.



General Lew Wallace was one such person. He was challenged by a friend to write a book proving the falsity of Jesus Christ. So, he diligently gathered all the documentation he could and began to write. He was four chapters into the book, he says, when it became clear to him that Jesus Christ was just as real a personality as Socrates, Plato, or Caesar.

“The conviction became a certainty. I knew that Jesus Christ had lived because of the facts connected with the period in which he lived.”

So he asked himself candidly, “If he was a real person, was he not then also the Son of God and the Savior of the world?” (Larson and Elshof 2008, 25)

He wound up becoming a believer and then went on and wrote the book, but with a very different purpose than he started out with. Instead of his book being a testament to agnosticism, it became a book about Jesus Christ and His impact on the culture of the day. Amazing how the author of Ben Hur started out writing the book trying to disprove the existence of Christ.

That is what happens when you “come and see.”

Nathanael went with Philip to see Jesus, and it changed his life forever. Jesus saw him approaching, and unlike the delegation that had gone to interview John the Baptist, holding preconceived notions of what they believed the truth to be. Nathanael has no preconceived ideas; he is a follower of Torah and as such is a follower of YAHWEH.

Jesus, who knows his own sheep and “calls” them (10:3; cf. through Philip in 1:48), here demonstrates his intimate knowledge of Nathanael, just as Nathanael quickly recognizes his shepherd (1:49; 10:4) and demonstrates “that he is a member of the people of God.” (Keener 2012, 487)

Jesus knows Nathanael and He reveals his true personality to him. Because of that, Nathanael suddenly realizes just who Jesus is. He confesses Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel. We began John with the revelation that Jesus Christ is God. As Jesus begins His ministry here on the planet, less than 3 days into that mission, the 5th person He has talked with, has realized he is God and confessed the same to Him.

Jesus fully understands the faith that has just been expressed to Him.

John 1:50–51

“Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”” (NASB 2020)

What Jesus is telling Nathanael, and those who are listening in around Him is that a change in the status quo has taken place. For hundreds of years, the gateway to God, the place to see His works was though the Temple.

Jesus makes an allusion to the stairway Jacob saw in his dream (Genesis 28:12) with angels going up and down. Jesus is the final Jacob and is the one angels will ascend and descend on. His incarnation has “united heaven and earth, in a sense providing in himself the first step to the “new heaven and new earth” of Revelation 21:1. The rest of John’s Gospel develops this image in several directions, but the key is that Jesus brings heaven and earth together in himself.” (Osborne 2018, 60)

Here Jesus is pointing out at the beginning of His ministry what the result of the cross will be. Greater things are yet to come. Access to heaven will be through Jesus and fully realized on the cross.



Matthew 27:50–51

“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.” (ESV)

The Holy of Holies was where God met man. Once a year, after a whole lot of preparation, only the High Priest could enter. Jesus changed all of that.

When the veil, that curtain, tore from top to bottom, it meant that access to the Father was now possible through the work of the Son. Jesus is indeed the gateway.

Where are you in this discussion? Are you walking around following no one in particular or are you wondering what this Jesus stuff is all about. You have been following from a distance and heard the Holy Spirit ask, what are you looking for? Come and see. Becoming a follower of Jesus Christ is not complicated at all. And yes, it will change you and do so forever.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.



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