

Come and See

Jesus wants people to follow Him in faith and truth.

JOHN 1:40-51



...with
 ...without
 ...as made.
 ...he was the
 ...darkness; and
 ...ed it not.
 ...from God, whose
 ...for a witness, to hear
 ...t, that all men through
 ...that Light, but was sent to
 ...of that Light.
 ...s the true Light, which lighteth
 ...that cometh into the world.
 ...as in the world, and the world was
 ...y him, and the world knew him not.
 ...ie came unto his own, and his own
 ...eived him not.
¹² But ¹³ as many as received him, to them
 gave he power to become the sons of God,
 even to them that believe on his name:
¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of
 the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,
 but of God.
¹⁴ And the Word ¹⁵ was made flesh, and
 dwelt among us, (and ¹⁶ we beheld his glory,
 the glory as of the only begotten of the
 Father,) full of grace and truth.

JOHN'S WITNESS OF CHRIST

¹⁵ John bare witness of him, and cried,
 saying, This was he of whom I spake, He
 that cometh after me is preferred before
 me: for he was before me.
¹⁶ And of his fulness have all we received,
 and grace for grace.
¹⁷ For the law was given by Moses, but
 grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
¹⁸ No man hath seen God at any time;
 the only begotten Son, which is in the
 bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

The Greek word monogenēs underlying only begotten means "only child" (Judg. 1:14;

20

How does a person's past experiences get in the way of them following Jesus?

Most of us are skeptical when it comes to promises made to us, with our experiences getting in the way. We want to trust the one making the promise, but we've been let down too many times. We just can't do it. Some people approach spiritual matters with this same hopeful skepticism, keeping their distance due to past experiences. The best response we can make may very well be to come and see, which is what the early followers of Jesus told others as well.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Jesus's encounter with His earliest disciples occurred during the ministry of John the Baptist. John was the forerunner of the Messiah. Many people wondered if he was the Christ, but John never aspired to an office that was not his. Representatives from the Jewish leaders confronted John over his authority to baptize (John 1:19-25).

John baptized with water, but the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit. In humility, John acknowledged he was not even worthy to untie the Messiah's sandals. Consequently, when Jesus asked to be baptized, John initially refused but then consented (Matt. 3:13-17). John testified that he witnessed the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus as the voice of God declared Him to be God's Son. Afterward, John pointed his followers to Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Messiah (John 1:29).

Two of these disciples immediately left John and followed Jesus. One of them was Andrew. After spending the day with Jesus, Andrew became convinced Jesus was indeed the Christ. He took this good news to his brother

and brought Simon to Jesus. This encounter was the first of several meetings that culminated in a change in Simon's identity and purpose as the fisherman became Peter, the fisher of men (1:35-42).

Leaving the Jordan where John baptized, Jesus traveled northward to Galilee, probably accompanied by Peter and Andrew. They lived in Bethsaida on the northern side of the Sea of Galilee. Arriving in their hometown, Jesus invited Philip, who also lived in Bethsaida, to follow him. Like Andrew, Philip's first reaction was to find another friend—Nathanael—and to introduce him to Jesus. At first, Nathanael was skeptical, but upon meeting Jesus, he quickly became a believer that Jesus was Christ (1:43-51).

JOHN 1:40-51

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and **followed him**.^A

41 He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the **Messiah**,"^B (which is translated "the Christ"), **42** and he brought Simon to Jesus. When Jesus saw him, he said, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which is translated "Peter"). **43** The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and told him, "**Follow me.**"^C **44** Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from **Nazareth.**"^D **46** "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked him. "**Come and see,**"^E Philip answered. **47** Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." **48** "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," Jesus answered.

49 "**Rabbi,**"^F Nathanael replied, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!" **50** Jesus responded to him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." **51** Then he said, "Truly I tell you, you will see **heaven opened**"^G and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Key Words

A. Before following Jesus, Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist.

B. The Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word *Christos*. Both terms mean "anointed one" and point to the promised Deliverer on whom the Jews had waited.

C. Jesus changed the traditional process from a student choosing a teacher as a mentor to a rabbi calling disciples to follow him.

D. A city located in southern Galilee, approximately halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. Its obscurity may have played a part in Nathanael's negative response.

E. When Nathanael expressed his skepticism, Philip did not argue. Instead, he invited his friend to experience Jesus for himself.

F. A title of honor that also means "master." It was often used to refer to teachers or mentors, especially those who were experts in the Mosaic law.

G. This reveals the concept of a new reality based on the Son of Man living as God on earth.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. ANDREW AND PETER

(JOHN 1:40-42)

Our true identity is found in following Jesus.

What challenges do we face when telling family members about Jesus?

How can Andrew's actions serve as a model for us?

How does meeting Jesus give a person a new identity?

2. PHILIP

(JOHN 1:43-46)

Believers must lovingly challenge others' false beliefs about Jesus.

What keeps people from believing that Jesus is the promised Messiah?

How might a person's preconceived notions about Jesus affect his or her willingness to follow Him?

3. NATHANAEL

(JOHN 1:47-51)

Believers can be assured of the truth of Jesus's identity.

What role does fulfilled prophecy play in a person's willingness to trust Jesus?

How does Jesus offer His followers assurance that He is the Son of God?

APPLY THE TEXT

Discuss with your group some of the misconceptions people have about the identity of Jesus.

What actions might you take in light of these misconceptions and concerns?

KEY DOCTRINE: Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle. (See Acts 1:8.)

BIBLE SKILL: Connect Old Testament prophecy to New Testament fulfillment.

Study the following passages and relate each to an aspect of fulfillment in Jesus's life: Genesis 3:15; 12:3; Deuteronomy 18:15; Numbers 24:17; Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14; 9:7; 53:3; and Jeremiah 31:15. What aspects of Jesus are identified that prove He is the Christ, the Son of God? How do these verses make a case that Jesus was the Messiah?

DID YOU KNOW? The other Gospels refer to Nathanael as Bartholomew; only in John is he called Nathanael. Bartholomew translates as "Son of Tolmai," which would have been his surname. Nathanael means "God has given." The only other information John gave about Nathanael was that he was from Cana of Galilee (21:2).

TALK IT OUT

In the last half of John 1:43, Jesus told Philip to follow Him. What does it mean to follow Jesus?

Most of us have grown accustomed to taking directions from a navigation system on our phones. The voice on our phone gives instruction and we follow it. Getting from Point A to Point B with a GPS app is surprisingly similar to following Christ. It starts with getting familiar with His voice.

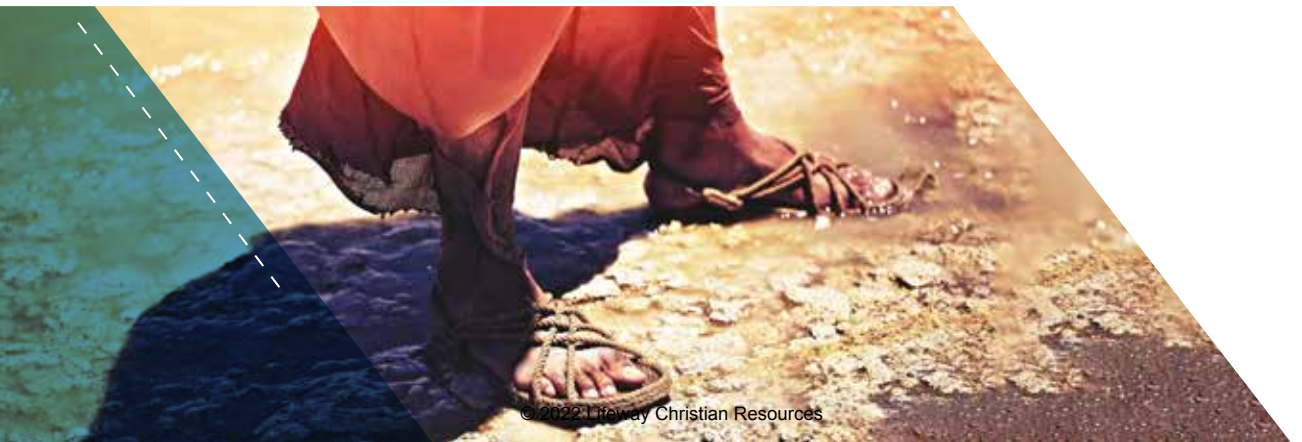
What do you find most interesting about John 1:43b? Why? Explain.

Philip was from the same hometown as Andrew and Peter. They knew Philip. What's even more interesting is that Jesus knew, and looked for, Philip. It wasn't a casual looking; Jesus intently looked for Philip with the invitation to follow Him. But what Jesus asked was not simply to follow directions like we do with a navigation device. The word Jesus used was an invitation to follow Him as a disciple—one who would learn from, and emulate, the teacher. Jesus calls us to follow Him in faith and truth.

What does it mean to follow Jesus today?

Memorize John 1:43b and consider Jesus's call to follow Him.

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: John 1:40-41

Notice what Andrew did.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he proclaimed Him to be “the Lamb of God” (v. 36). Two of John’s disciples heard what he said and began to follow Jesus. One who followed Jesus was *Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother*. Most biblical scholars believe the other was John, the one who wrote this Gospel. The two *followed* Jesus. Rabbis typically walked while they taught; thus their disciples were considered “followers.” To be a follower meant the student had made a commitment to his teacher and his teacher’s doctrine.

Andrew’s *first* priority was to find his *brother Simon* and tell him they had found the Messiah. He was not content to tell Simon what he had learned from Jesus; rather, he *brought* him. The term *brought* carries the idea of leading, as in leading an animal. We can imagine Andrew excitedly talking and encouraging Simon every step of the way. Evangelism involves introducing people to Jesus. Telling family members about Jesus can be challenging. We may be afraid they will reject not only the message but also the messenger. Andrew’s action serves as a model and motivator for us to introduce family members to Christ.

What challenges do you face when telling family members about Jesus?

How can Andrew’s actions serve as a model for you?

Day 2: John 1:42

Circle Simon’s new name.

Andrew was not satisfied telling his brother about finding the Messiah. He took things a step further and *brought Simon to Jesus*. Perhaps, in the same way that Jesus invited Andrew to “come and see,” Andrew wanted Simon to see Jesus for himself.

As soon as *Jesus saw him* (Simon), He made a pronouncement that would change Simon’s life. Jesus proclaimed that Simon would be called *Cephas*, the Aramaic word “Rock,” which in Greek is *Petros* and Anglicized as “Peter.” This was not a proper name but a nickname—one this disciple would eventually live up to as he boldly proclaimed, lived for, and ultimately died for the resurrected Christ. Like Peter, our true identity is found in following Jesus. Some people are known by their family. Others are identified by their vocation. When we follow Christ, everything else becomes secondary. We should live so others might see us and say, “That’s a Christ follower.”

How has meeting Jesus given you a new identity?

Day 3: John 1:43-46

Highlight Jesus's command.

Jesus left the area where John had been baptizing and headed to Galilee. Once there, He found Philip, which meant He went looking for Philip. *Follow me* carries with it the understanding of an ongoing commitment to follow Jesus as a disciple. Philip could not wait to tell his friend Nathanael about Jesus. In using the plural pronoun, *we have found*, Philip was including himself among Jesus's followers.

In connecting Jesus with Moses and the prophets, Philip was declaring Jesus to be the Messiah, a theme in John's Gospel. Philip also referred to Jesus as *the son of Joseph, from Nazareth*. Nathanael's question about whether *anything good* could come from Nazareth likely had nothing to do with the village's reputation. It was probably based on the fact that Nazareth was an insignificant village that was not mentioned in the Old Testament or in any other Jewish writings that foretold the coming Messiah. Surely the Messiah could not come from such an obscure place! In response to Nathanael's question, Philip said simply: *Come and see*. Philip was confident that if Nathanael could just meet Jesus, he too would be convinced Jesus was the Messiah.

What keeps people from believing that Jesus is the promised Messiah?

How did your understanding of Jesus affect your willingness to follow Him?

Day 4: John 1:47-49

Pay attention to Nathanael's confession.

Jesus's response astonished Nathanael. His question—*How do you know me?*—was more than “Have we met before?” Jesus had seen into Nathanael's very core. *Under the fig tree* was an idiom. Since people couldn't gather a crop from a fig tree or a grapevine for some years after it was planted, being able to sit under it indicated a prolonged period of peace. It meant the plants had not been destroyed by war (1 Kings 4:25). By the New Testament era, the phrase had come to refer to the place where men of faith, especially rabbis, could study the law in tranquility and in the relative comfort that the fig tree's shade provided. To say that He had seen Nathanael under the fig tree was Jesus's way of acknowledging that Nathanael was a dedicated student of the Word.

Nathanael, who had been skeptical that anything good could come from Nazareth, made a great declaration of faith about Jesus's true identity. Nathanael proclaimed that standing before him was none other than the Son of God and the long-anticipated King of Israel. In this one exclamation, Nathanael encapsulated what John had been building to in this first chapter—Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah.

What role does fulfilled prophecy play in your willingness to trust Jesus?

Day 5: John 1:50-51

Contemplate the meaning of “greater things.”

As Jesus had spoken about Nathanael’s past (vv. 47-48), He was about to speak about his future—and the rest of His disciples’ future as well. Jesus promised Nathanael he would see even *greater things*. In verse 51, Jesus shifted from talking to Nathanael and began addressing the group. The pronoun *you* changes in verse 51 to plural; Jesus began speaking to all of His followers. He spoke of *heaven* opening and *angels of God ascending and descending* on Him. In Genesis, Jacob had a dream in which angels were going up and down a stairway between heaven and the earth. Jacob was confident that he was standing at the very gates of heaven that day (Gen. 28:16-17). He was so moved by his dream that he changed the name of the place where he had the dream from Luz to Bethel, which means “House of God.” Jesus was telling His disciples that God would no longer reveal Himself in a certain location; He was going to reveal Himself in Jesus, the Son of Man. Jesus came to connect heaven and earth.

After Jesus called these men, their lives were never the same. He may have called the least likely, but these men would turn “the world upside down” with the gospel (Acts 17:6). The good news is that Jesus still calls us to follow Him.

How does Jesus offer you assurance that He is the Son of God?

APPLY THE TEXT

Each of the men in these verses became followers of Jesus. Have you also become one of His followers? If so, who else do you need to invite to follow Him? If not, what is your biggest hindrance from doing so? What actions do you need to take that demonstrate you are following Jesus?

