

Come and See – and Believe!
Read John 1.19-51

INTRODUCTION / MAKING THE CONNECTION

1 / The riddle has often been posed: *“What is shallow enough for a child to wade in yet deep enough for an elephant to swim in?”* And the answer is: *“The Gospel of John!”* On the surface, John seems to be so simple and straightforward. The language used in writing John [both in Greek and English] is simpler grammatically and uses a smaller vocabulary in comparison with the other three Synoptic Gospels. Very frequently, first year Greek students will begin their elementary translating work using passages from the **Gospel of John** [or **1 John**].

2 / That’s why we say John is shallow enough for a child to wade in. We often use **The Gospel of John** to reach out to unbelievers to introduce them to Jesus Christ. And we recommend new believers to read this book. That is a testimony to its simplicity.

3 / But the truths that are contained in **The Gospel of John** are so deep, so expansive, so eternal, so sublime, so ethereal – so beyond our ability to comprehend and relate to our human experiences – that it will require eternity itself to really begin to grasp and plumb the true meanings of so much that is written in this book. We’ll have to take what Jesus said to Nathanael in **chapter 1.50** for ourselves...and wait for later: *“...do you believe? You will see greater things than these!”*

4 / Every time we come back to this book to read and study it again, we will discover so many more truths that manifest and magnify the greatness of Jesus Christ. And so it is with this current study. That is why we have titled this lesson **‘Come and See – and Believe!’** ... because I am so newly impressed as we begin this survey and study of the Gospel of John that this is at least one of John’s primary purposes and plans for what he included in this Gospel and how he has laid it out in the writing of it.

I / ‘COME AND SEE!’

1 / This is the personal invitation that is repeated twice **in the end of chapter 1 – in verses 19-51**. This is after John has written this introduction to who Jesus Christ is: THE WORD.

[1] The invitation was given by Jesus Himself [**ch 1.39**] to two of John Baptist’s disciples...after he had called out to his disciples to **‘behold ... look at ... see for yourself’ the Lamb of God!** [**ch 1.29, 35-36**]. **This also is just another way to say ‘Come and See – and Believe!’**

[2] The second invitation to ‘Come and See!’ was given by Philip to his friend Nathanael in **ch 1.46** after he [Philip] had already spent some **‘come and see’** time with Jesus for himself.

2 / And yet, this call and invitation to **‘Come and See’** is one of the many prominent key words and theme-threads that runs all throughout the Gospel of John and ties it all together. [*PERSONAL NOTE: we are only finishing up chapter 1, and I have already written down more than twenty prominent theme/key word threads that I know John will weave all throughout this book*]

3 / In fact, what I’m going to propose here is that we take this theme of **‘Come and See!’** and use it as a kind of guide to lead us through the reading and study of John throughout these lessons. Let’s use **‘Come and See!’** as one of our primary ‘Sherpas’ to lead us and point out many of the lessons we will learn during this study.

4 / There is no ‘only one way’ to read The Gospel of John. What we do know for sure is that John is not just a random streaming of stories, recollections, or memories that John recalled and decided to write down here at the end of the first century – as the last living apostle of Jesus Christ. NO! John clearly had a stated purpose for writing this Gospel account. And he plainly tells us what his purpose was from the beginning to the end of his book – **“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His Name.”** [**ch 20.30-31**].

[1] John wrote about a series of selected signs [miracles] that Jesus performed;

[2] All of these miracle-signs were ‘witnesses’ and ‘testimonies’ (same word in Greek) and pointed to Jesus’ Deity, His God-ness, that He is ‘the Son of God’ – in other words, every one of these miracle-signs that Jesus performed was His call and invitation to **‘Come and See Who I AM!’**;

[3] Every one of these miracle-signs that Jesus performed was also a call to faith in Him, to **‘Believe in Me!’ (as they did, for example, in ch 2.11 – and will throughout this book)**

5 / This theme of **‘Come and See – and Believe!’** will be announced by the keyword theme/thread that John will use all throughout this Gospel to tie together all these personal encounters that Jesus will have with others as He calls them to believe in Him. That keyword is: **WITNESS/BEAR WITNESS** [both verb and noun] and its twin word **TESTIFY/TESTIMONY** [both verb and noun]. These twin words are the same in the Greek language...

6 / If you will follow just this one keyword all throughout John’s Gospel, you will begin to see the purpose, theme, and scheme John has in mind as he writes all of these accounts he references in **ch 20.30-31**.

7 / And then, if you add what John says about himself being a true eyewitness to all these things, his purpose and plan in what he writes here will come into sharper focus...

ch 19.35: He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.

ch 21.24: This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

II / THE FATHER SAYS: ‘COME AND SEE – AND BELIEVE!’ WHO I AM ... IN MY SON!

1 / Jesus repeatedly says ‘the Father sent Me’ into the world. Or refers to Himself as ‘He whom the Father has sent.’ **see for example John 17.1-5**

2 / So, why did the Father send the Son into our world? The Father sent His Only Son into the world to make Himself visible and known in Him and through Him. The Father wants us to know who He is, to know Him in eternal life, and be with Him forever.

3 / So, He sent His Only Son from His own Presence and Glory, and then calls us to ‘Come and See – and Believe!’ in Me ... in My Son! **ch 1.14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled / tented] among us, and we have seen His Glory, Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

4 / So much so, that Jesus will declare in **John 14.7: If you had known Me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.**

III / THE SON SAYS: ‘COME AND SEE – AND BELIEVE!’ IN THE FATHER ... IN ME!

1 / Jesus’ expressly stated purpose for coming into our world was to manifest [make visible] the Father. John declares that purpose and the fulfillment of it in **ch 1.18: No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known.**

2 / And again, in **John 14.8-11**, Jesus emphasizes to Philip that he [Philip] had seen the Father by seeing Jesus Christ: **Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.”**

IV / JOHN THE BAPTIST [BAPTIZER] SAYS: ‘COME AND SEE – AND BELIEVE!’ IN JESUS ... AS OUR LONG-EXPECTED AND ANTICIPATED MESSIAH!

1 / Over and over, John the Baptist bore witness to Jesus Christ and called out for everyone who heard him to ‘Come and See – and Believe!’ in Jesus as the Son of God and their Savior / **see ch 1.6-8; 15; 19-28.**

2 / In fact, John the Baptist was ‘a man sent from God’ [ch 1.6] for this very purpose: so that God could publicly and visibly reveal Jesus Christ as Deity – the Son of God – and Israel’s Messiah / **see ch 1.29-34.** His ministry in general and his baptism in particular served to [1] introduce; [2] identify; and [3] inaugurate Jesus Christ into His ministry.

3 / After Jesus had been baptized by John the Baptist, every time John sees Jesus or speaks of Him in any way, he is always calling on everyone who heard him to ‘Come and See – and Believe!’ in Jesus Christ / **ch 1.29 & 35-36.**

4 / Jesus will again later on commend John the Baptist for the witness and testimony John bore to Him / **ch 5.32-35**

Now we come to the two more specific ‘Come and See’ witnesses in our lesson text...

V / ch 1.35-42 / JESUS CALLS TO TWO OF JOHN THE BAPTIST’S DISCIPLES TO ‘COME AND SEE – AND BELIEVE!’ ... AS THEIR MESSIAH [CHRIST]!

1 / **v 35** / Some of the disciples who had been following John the Baptist from the days when he was announcing that Christ was about to be manifested and seen ... they were still following John now even after Jesus had been baptized, revealed, and made to be seen. But John knows that his calling and ministry has now been fulfilled.

2 / **vv 36-37** / So he emphatically draws attention to Jesus and calls on His disciples to now ‘Behold ... look ... see the Lamb of God!’ As if to say, ‘He is the One you must now see, and believe in, and follow!’ So two of his disciples do just that – they begin to follow Jesus.

3 / **v 38** / Jesus turns to them with a question: ‘What are you seeking?’ He asks this question in all sincerity. He wants to test the genuineness and integrity of their interest in Him. Are they seeking Him only for the novelty or out of a merely human curiosity? Or are they genuinely interested in seeing more intimately into what John the Baptist has been declaring about Him?

4 / **v 38** / So they reply to His question about what they are seeking with “Rabbi [this word means ‘Teacher’ or even more ‘Master’], where are You staying?” What they are saying in this response question is: “Rabbi, we want to spend some time with you. We want to learn more about who you are. We are genuinely interested in seeing into your character and message.”

5 / **v 39** / Jesus responds with His gracious invitation: “Come and you will see.” Jesus is more interested in our seeing Him than we could ever be in seeing Him as we think we need to and want to. So that’s what they did. Jesus was staying with someone as their guest. They followed Jesus to where He was staying. At this time, it was around 4pm, so they stayed overnight with Jesus in the guest home. Who knows if they got any sleep at all that night!

6 / **vv 40-42** / One of these two of John the Baptist’s disciples was Andrew. Andrew was Simon Peter’s brother. We will later on become more familiar with Peter than with Andrew. But Andrew was the one who went searching for Simon and brought him to Jesus. John doesn’t use these words here in his account, but surely at some time in their conversations, Andrew excitedly gestured and exclaimed to his brother, Simon, **‘Come and See! See for yourself! We have found the One who is prophesied and promised all throughout the Old Testament – our Messiah, our Christ!’** [‘Messiah’ is the Hebrew word that means ‘Anointed’ and ‘Christ’ is the Greek language equivalent for the same word].

7 / **v 42** / When Jesus saw Simon coming to see Him, He knew the plans He had for him in the short years to come. So He named Simon ‘Cephas’ [in the Aramaic commonly-spoken language of their day] which means ‘Peter’ [in Greek] ... both of these names mean the same thing: Rock.

8 / **NOTE:** how welcoming Jesus is to our desires to know Him more and better – and how willing He is to show and tell us as much about Himself as we are interested to learn. **NOTE ALSO:** that when we

truly come to see Jesus and believe on Him, we must be telling others what we have seen and heard / see **Acts 4.13-20**.

**VI / ch 1.43-51 / PHILIP CALLS TO NATHANAEL TO ‘COME AND SEE – AND BELIEVE!’
... THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD & KING OF ISRAEL!**

1 / v 43-44 / Jesus migrates now from the Jordan River area where He had been baptized and where the previous encounters had taken place. He now goes a few miles north to Galilee – maybe to Bethsaida up on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. **“He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow me!’”** ... indicating that whereas in the previous encounter, they followed Him out of interest in learning more about Him, in this instance, Jesus takes the initiative to seek out Philip and call him to follow Him. **“Philip, come and see Me for who I AM!”** Philip does just that – and he becomes a believer in Jesus’ Deity! He is convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is their Promised Messiah!

2 / vv 45-46 / So what does Philip do? He goes to find another friend of his – Nathanael! Philip excitedly tells Nathanael that **‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph!’** Or at least, that’s how they knew Jesus in this first introduction. They would come to know Him better in days to come – that He was, in truth, the Son of God! Deity! Conceived by God the Holy Spirit and virgin-born! But for now, they knew Him by His earthly and human origins. But Philip is convinced that Jesus is their Promised Messiah!

3 / Nathanael is not so sure. He is still skeptical. He can be convinced – but he must be sure for himself. **“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”** Whatever the then-current and local prejudices were against Nazareth, Nathanael isn’t sure that the Messiah they were long-expecting would come from a lowly village like Nazareth. So Philip again exclaims, **“Come and See!”** Nathanael sets out to do just that.

4 / vv 47-49 / REMEMBER: Jesus knows all things about all people – we’ll be told this about Jesus just a little later on [**ch 2.24-25**]. But here He witnesses to His own Deity by demonstrating His omniscience: He had full and intimate knowledge of where Nathanael was when Philip told him about Jesus – and He knew what Nathanael was thinking. Jesus commends Nathanael’s genuine and sincere interest in knowing the truth about what Philip had said about Jesus when He greeted Nathanael’s approach with, **“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”**

5 / Nathanael was more than just taken aback ... he was incredulous! **“How do you know me ... and my heart ... and my thoughts?”** Then Jesus astounded him even further: **“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you!”** [We have an expression nowadays when someone makes a statement that threatens to identify something we think internally and privately – we say, “I feel seen!”] Nathanael recognizes that Jesus knows him intimately! He has come and he has seen! And he believes! **“Nathanael answered Him, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’** All of these titles, descriptors, and names are ascriptions of Deity! [**see ch 5.17-18 & 10.31-33 just for two examples**].

6 / vv 50-51 / Nathanael is a believer in Jesus’ Deity just because Jesus has revealed to him that He has all knowledge of us – both physically and spiritually. Jesus promises Nathanael that he will see even greater evidences of Jesus’ Deity than he had just witnessed. As he continued to follow Jesus, he would see greater displays and demonstrations of Jesus’ Deity. What Jesus recalls here in verse 51 is a reference to the dream Jacob had in Genesis 28.10-17. Jacob’s dream was a kind of ‘Come and See – and Believe!’ event for him, too. The dream revealed that Yahweh was there in that place with him! That’s what Nathanael would see also.

7 / Interestingly, the only other time Nathanael is named [by this name] is in **John 21.2**. He certainly saw clear evidences of Jesus’ Deity that day also.

HERE’S CALLING EACH ONE OF US TO ‘COME AND SEE – AND BELIEVE!’