

# Come and See

John 1:43-51

## Introduction

This story follows a pattern common to many stories about Jesus we read in the *Gospel of John*. We begin with a somewhat fuzzy picture of who He is, and it gradually sharpens until it is crystal clear by the end. This is an **EPIPHANY** story, revealing Jesus to us.

## Finding Jesus

The story begins with Jesus finding Philip and calling him to be a disciple. The first thing Philip does is run and get a friend, Nathanael, whose name means “God has given.” Philip is excited because they have found *“him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph”* (v. 45). Notice how Philip identifies Jesus. He is “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” This is how everyone in the area knew Jesus. He was the carpenter’s son from Nazareth. But Philip is excited because he recognizes something different about Him. Without calling Him the Messiah, he recognizes prophecy in Him.

## Can Anything Good?

Nathanael’s response is classic. *“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”* (v. 46). Their home town, Bethsaida was about 40 miles from Nazareth. This comment showed the kind of reputation the village of Nazareth had in those days. There was a Roman garrison there, and that was the only thing the town was known for. No seminaries or special people had ever come from Nazareth. And because of the Romans, it had the reputation of being the armpit of Israel. To top it off, Nazareth is not mentioned in any prophecies, let alone Messianic ones.

## Change Your Perspective

In the face of such skepticism, what can we do? Philip doesn’t try to make an argument for his case, as we would do. He doesn’t get all defensive. He simply says, *“Come and see”* (v. 46). “I know you won’t believe me. Just come along and see for yourself.” There is a time and place for apologetics, defending the faith. In our Third Year Confirmation, we are learning about other denominations, other religions, and other worldviews, to be able to better defend the faith. It’s good to be able to carry on an intelligent conversation about what you believe and why. But those arguments don’t tend to win people over. People believe what they believe because of their perspective. That’s why we have such division in the world today. Everyone has a different perspective, and we try to interpret each other from our own perspective. For one to be able to change a belief, he or she must change their perspective. The best answer for skepticism is to “come and see for yourself. Don’t take my word for it. Come and get a good look at Jesus from another perspective.”

## A Guileless Israelite

Jesus greets Nathanael with a play on words that gets his attention. *“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit”* (v. 47). Jacob, the father of the Israelites was the opposite of this. From the way he cheated his brother out of his birthright to tricking his father into giving him the blessing to the

deceitful dealings with his uncle Laban, Jacob was a trickster through and through. But here, Nathanael is an honest man. As I said, this gets Nathanael's attention and he asks, "*How did you know me?*" (v. 48). What Jesus said about him is true. But how did Jesus know this?

## "Son of God"

Jesus answers by telling Nathanael that he even knew where he was when Philip found him. This shocks Nathanael into confessing that Jesus is the Son of God. Nathanael actually makes this confession before Peter's famous, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (**Mathew 16:16**). Paul says in **1 Corinthians 12:3**, *No one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit*. Nathanael didn't just make this exclamation because he was impressed. God revealed it to him who Jesus is. It's an **EPIPHANY**.

## "Son of Man"

Jesus uses this opportunity to take that revelation a little further. He tells them why He's here. By calling Himself "*The Son of Man*" (v. 51), He refers to **Daniel 7** (read **Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14**). What the ESV renders as "human being" is "son of man" in Aramaic. The Son of Man is the intermediary between the Ancient of Days (God the Father) and mankind. What makes this mediation possible is Jesus' death on the cross. That's where angels will be "*ascending and descending*" (v. 51) on Him. Once again, we see the **EPIPHANY** moment identify Jesus as the Son of God and point to the cross.

## Means of Grace

When we receive His body and blood at Communion, we receive the Son of Man, and He is revealed as the mediator between God and us. **COME AND SEE** the Son of God; **COME AND SEE** the Son of Man; **COME AND SEE** our Mediator.

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*And the peace of God,  
Which passes all understanding,  
Will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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