

# Come and See

## John 1:35-42

### Dr. Paul Cannings

#### A. Are We Ready? (vs. 35-36):

1. John was standing with the two – John the Baptist was standing still when Jesus came towards him. Jesus made a point to come back to John the Baptist two days in a row especially since John the Baptist did not recognize Him at first (vs. 29-34).
  - a) The events recorded in 1:35–4:42 apparently belong to the period between Jesus' baptism and temptation and the beginning of his Galilean ministry (see Mark 1:14–15).[\[1\]](#)
2. John was standing with the two – When John the Baptist recognized Christ, he provides a title that captured the very purpose of His mission on earth: “The Lamb of God.” (John 3:16).
  - a) The cry, “Look, the Lamb of God,” [Lamb – signifying Christ death] is a directive to the two disciples of John to follow Jesus. In 37 ἠκολούθησαν, “they followed,” is literally meant, but the nature of the narrative indicates it as a first step towards becoming disciples of Jesus. The Evangelist would have *all* the followers of John in his day to listen to their master and follow the Lamb.[\[2\]](#)
3. Disciples – John's disciples, who faithfully learned from him believed like he did in the Messiah. John the Baptist did not merely prepare the way for Jesus; he also prepared disciples for Him. His followers were so well-prepared and ready that John did not need to instruct to follow Christ, they were spiritually and mentally ready to serve Him.
4. As Jesus walked – Jesus intently and continuously kept moving in the direction of John the Baptist. This was a meeting that Jesus purposed to have.
5. Behold – By saying ‘behold’ John was commanding his disciple's full attention. He was directing them to focus their attention on what he had been teaching them, and that is to look for the Messiah who is now before them. Regardless of what we are learning today, it must always lead us to a deeper connection with Christ.

6. When the two disciples heard him speak – John’s followers were true and faithful disciples because they demonstrated that they were learning what John the Baptist was teaching them. As soon as he verbalized who Christ was, they immediately shifted their allegiance to Christ. There was no hesitation – they left with the firm intention to follow Jesus and never look back. They left determined to be Christ’s disciples.
7. Follow – When the two disciples left John, they did so with clear purpose: to learn from Christ, to obey His teaching, and to become His disciples in the fullest sense of the word. Their hearts were set – not on titles or fame – but on true discipleship.
  - a) After the disciples started following Jesus, He moved forward with His mission. It looks like His return was the beginning of shifting the focus to Himself, starting by taking two of John’s disciples, who would help form the foundation of the twelve thrones of Israel.

## **B. We Are Invited (vs. 37-38):**

1. Jesus turned and saw them following – Jesus carefully observed that John’s disciples were now committed to learn from Him, trust in Him and obey Him. By leaving John the Baptist they were visibly demonstrating that they would now cleave to Christ no matter where He would lead them. Jesus made a point to engage with them.
2. Jesus turned and saw them following – The life and teaching of John the Baptist was faithfully executed because without hesitation these two disciples immediately surrendered their lives to become Christ’s disciples.
  - a) The word “followed” probably has a double meaning here. They followed Him in the sense of literal walking and also as His disciples, that is, they turned their allegiance to Jesus that day.[\[3\]](#)
3. Christ said to them – Christ continually talked with the disciples, acknowledging their presence and welcoming them as His disciples. From that moment forward, He only addressed those who chose to follow Him – beginning with those who came from John. Prior to John the Baptist, God had not spoken directly to men in this way.

4. What do you seek – Christ did not say, “What do you want to know?” but rather, “What do you see?” He continually called for a verbal expression of their intentions, prompting them to declare what they truly desired from Him.
5. Rabbi where are you staying – The disciples now recognized Christ as their teacher (Rabbi), and were prepared to offer Him the same loyalty and devotion they had previously given to John the Baptist. The transition from following John to following Christ was now complete.
  - a) To find out where Christ was staying seems to indicate that these disciples were determined to remain with Christ.
  - b) The Semitic term “rabbi” (lit., “my great one”) was a common term of honor used by disciples to address their teacher. For the benefit of John’s Greek-speaking readers, he here translates the term into Greek (*didaskalos*; cf. 20:16). By the end of the first century a.d., the expression had become a technical term for “ordained” teachers who had satisfied certain formal requirements of rabbinic training. At this point, however, the term is used more generally to refer to a respected Jewish religious teacher, such as Nicodemus (3:10), Jesus (1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8; 20:16), and even John the Baptist (3:26).[\[4\]](#)
6. He said to them come – Jesus repeatedly confirmed their desire to commit to Him by responding to John’s disciples request by continuously commanding them to come with Him. Christ accepted them as His disciples.
  - a) These two disciples follow Jesus and when asked about their interests by him (“What are you looking for?”) they ask where he is staying (or remain). “Come and see” He replies. This language is consciously designed to describe discipleship: to follow (Gk: *akoulotheô*), to come and see, and to remain (Gk: *menô*) each describe aspects of discipleship—and it is interesting to see that the same pattern of discipleship is played out with Philip and Nathanael in the following section.[\[5\]](#)
7. He said to them come – Even though we may say we are committed to Christ we must be purposeful in our determination to engage in His Word, to trust His direction and to surrender to His call.
8. And you will see – Not until we are committed to surrender to the will of Christ can we fully experience all that He has for us to gain a complete understanding of who He is. Many followed Christ but only for what He would give to them. These men asked for nothing more than to be

Christ's disciples. Because they accepted John's discipleship they can now learn all that God had prepared for them to experience.

9. And you will see – John taught his disciples who the Messiah was and then directed them to follow Him. However, only Jesus can fully expose them to all that He is. It is only when we are truly committed to fully surrender our lives to Christ can we become completely exposed to all that He is and all we can become.
10. They came and saw where He was staying – Not only did they hear His invitation, but they responded immediately. Even without knowing where Christ was going, they chose to follow Him completely, seeking to understand fully the way He Lived.
  - a) The “tenth hour” by usual reckonings would be about 4 p.m., possibly too late in the afternoon to walk a long way home before dark and thus implying that a hospitable person would invite them to spend the night. (By another system of time reckoning, unlikely here, the “tenth hour” could mean 10 a.m.; this system fits 19:14 better but not 4:6.).[\[6\]](#)
11. They came and saw where He was staying – They left the familiar conditions of life with John to dwell where Christ remained, because they were fully committed. True discipleship isn't about staying in our comfort zones, it's about being completely willing to follow Christ wherever He leads.

## **C. It's a New Day (vs. 40-42):**

1. One of the two who heard John – The disciple who was Peter's brother was completely committed to the teaching of John the Baptist. He wasn't just a listener; he had a wholehearted desire to live out what John taught.
2. One of the two who heard John – When our learning of Christ exposes our eyes to all that Christ is (1 Cor. 2:10-12) our desire to be surrendered to Him deepens to a full surrender.
3. Follow Him – The disciple of John who first followed Jesus demonstrated not only his understanding of John's teaching, but also his complete alignment with it. When John declared Jesus to be the Messiah, this disciple --- faithfully awaiting the promised One --- immediately surrendered himself to Christ. That disciple was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter.

4. He found first his own brother – Andrew was fully convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and deeply committed to becoming His disciple, especially after spending a day with Him. With unwavering determination and no intention of stopping, he immediately sought out his brother Peter to share the news.
  
5. He found first his own brother – The call to discipleship is best experienced when it comes from someone who is a disciple.
  - a) Andrew is introduced as “Simon Peter’s brother,” being the less famous of the two (cf. also 6:8 and Mk. 1:16, Mt. 4:18, 10:2, Lk. 6:14); and, except at 12:22, he is always associated with Peter. Jn. assumes that everyone will know who Simon Peter was, a similar assumption being made by Lk., who mentions “the house of Simon” and “Simon’s wife’s mother” (Lk. 4:38), before anything is told about Simon himself. See, further, on 6:8 for the prominence of Andrew in the Fourth Gospel.[\[7\]](#)
  
6. Said – Andrew repeatedly, with no desire to ever stop saying, to his brother Peter, he had found the Messiah. He was so convinced Jesus is the Messiah he reviewed the Jesus as the long-awaited anointed Christ.
  - a) The title “Messiah” came to be used of the future Davidic King (cf. Matt. 1:1; John 6:15). In bringing his brother Simon Peter to Christ, no man did the church a greater service than Andrew. Andrew appeared two more times in John (6:4–9; 12:20–22); both times he was bringing someone to Jesus. The unnamed disciple is commonly held to be John the son of Zebedee, a brother of James and author of this Gospel. In Mark 1:16–20 two pairs of brothers (Simon and Andrew, James and John) who were fishermen were called by Jesus.[\[8\]](#)
  
7. He brought him to Jesus – Andrew, literally, like carrying a suitcase through an airport, brought Peter into the presence of Christ.
  - a) The Hebrew term “Messiah” (1:41) means “Anointed One” and was translated into the Greek as “Christ.” “Cephas” (1:42) was an Aramaic name; “Peter” was the same name in Greek. Both words mean “stone.”[\[9\]](#)

- b) Notice he did not have to explain to Peter who the Messiah is.
8. Jesus looked at Peter – When Jesus looked at Peter, His gaze was fixed and thoughtful – unlike how He looked at anyone else. He gave Peter so much attention that He changed his name. He knew who Peter was because He knew who His father was – supernatural, prophetic. Even though Peter’s father gave him a name, Christ changed it, as if to communicate ‘I am now your Father’ (He has full authority over Peter’s life, just as Adam named Eve) and your family.
- a) Jesus accepted Andrew and the unknown disciple but gave significant attention to Peter to the point of renaming him from Simon to Cephas (Peter).
9. Called – Peter’s brother brought him to Christ, but it was Christ who made a decisive move, divinely calling Peter into a new family, under a new authority, and into an entirely new way of live.
- a) 1:42. “Cephas” is Aramaic and “Peter” Greek for “rock.” Nicknames were common, and rabbis sometimes gave characterizing nicknames to their disciples. In the Old Testament, God often changed names to describe some new characteristic of a person (Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Joshua; as a negative declaration see Jer 20:3).[\[10\]](#)
- b) Names unveil something of the character of the person (as Jacob means “he clutches” [his brother’s heel], Gen. 25:26) and renaming indicates something of the authority of one person over the other (as God renames Abram, Gen. 17:5). Jesus is here asserting his authority over Peter and telling him that he is a different man, a man who is about to acquire the character of his true name, a name he has likely forgotten.[\[11\]](#) Abram, Abraham - Sarai - Sarah, Saul- Paul.
- c) Notice Peter did not get upset or dispute with Christ about the name change.
10. Called – If we desire to know God’s specific calling for our lives or to understand what He has prepared for us, it begins with true discipleship --- a full commitment to follow Christ. We cannot grow into the fullness of who God has called us to be apart from the body of Christ, His Church (Eph. 4:13).
- a) Jesus foresaw that Peter would become a pillar and a foundation stone in the building of the first-century church (see Matthew 16:16–18; Galatians 2:9; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4–5).[\[12\]](#)

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[3] Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 275). Victor Books.

[4] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts](#). (Vol. 2, p. 18). Zondervan.

[5] Burge, G. M. (2005). [Gospel of John](#). In C. A. Evans & C. A. Bubeck (Eds.), *John's Gospel, Hebrews–Revelation* (First Edition, p. 45). David C Cook.

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[11] Burge, G. M. (2005). [Gospel of John](#). In C. A. Evans & C. A. Bubeck (Eds.), *John's Gospel, Hebrews–Revelation* (First Edition, p. 45). David C Cook.

[12] Barton, B., Comfort, P., Osborne, G., Taylor, L. K., & Veerman, D. (2001). [Life Application New Testament Commentary](#) (pp. 377–378). Tyndale.