

# Follow me, come and see

by Rev Dan Balsdon | January 2021 | read online at [www.revdanbalsdon.com](http://www.revdanbalsdon.com)

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Have you ever struggled to decide whether to believe something or not?

I saw an advert for what looked like a really good deal on some Lego sets the other day but wasn't sure whether or not the advert was legitimate. I'm usually quite cautious but this time as I weighed up my desire for the Lego with the uncertainty of whether or not it was legitimate - I placed an order. I'm still waiting to know whether I should have steered clear rather than getting involved!

In the early stages of Jesus ministry, as John's gospel tells is, Jesus finds Phillip and says 'follow me'. (John 1:43-51). Phillip seemingly does, but not until he's gone off and invited Nathanael too.

*'Nathanael, we've found the promised one, the one that law and prophets wrote about, Jesus from Nazareth – he's here'.*

*'Nazareth? Phillip – can anything good come from there?'*

*'Nathanael, come and see...'*

The texts tells us little about Nathanael, but it seems to me that from the little we do get, we see a man was struggling to know whether to believe the murmurs he was hearing. Perhaps he was nervous about putting his hopes into this Jesus bloke he knew so little about himself. Weighing up the situation – steer clear or jump in? Believe, or hold out for certainty?

Phillip's invitation makes its impact. Nathanael does jump in – though how much he believed at that moment is not clear. Then Jesus sees him coming.

*'Here is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' says Jesus.*

*'How on earth can you say that?' Asks Nathanael, 'you don't know me!'*

*'I saw you, even before Phillip called you' responds Jesus.*

*'You are the Son of God, the King of Israel' declares Nathanael.*

Nathanael seems to move from scepticism to declaration of believe at an inconceivable pace. Seemingly through Nathanael's coming to see, he discovers that Jesus knows of him, and that is enough for him to believe Jesus is the Son of God.

I don't think it is a coincidence that this short story about Nathanael comes in the first chapter of John's Gospel. This invitation: **'follow me, come and see'** was not only an invitation to Phillip and Nathanael, but to the readers and hearers of the gospel – and to us as we engage with the text today.

The call to **'Come and See'** invites us to make that choice to get involved, to read on and discover the signs of awe and wonder that the gospel serves as a witness to. To discover who Jesus is and that Jesus does not steer clear of us.

At the other end of John's Gospel, after the resurrection, we read Thomas' story. Thomas had missed Jesus' first appearance in the upper room and declares 'unless I see, I will not believe'. A week later Jesus appears before Thomas and he declares 'my Lord and my God'. (see John 20:24-29)

Thomas and Nathanael are characters I think many of us can relate to – struggling with weighing up our own tussles between belief and certainty. For both Thomas and Nathanael Jesus offers signs that give them confidence to believe.

Jump in and get involved.

Hear the invitation - Come and see.

Hear Jesus voice saying follow me – giving confidence to believe.

### **Reflect**

When has Jesus offered you signs that lead you to belief?

Think about Nathanael - How have you chosen to 'jump in' and get involved with Jesus?

Think about Phillip - When have you invited someone to 'come and see' Jesus?

### **Respond**

How are you getting involved with Jesus?

How are you inviting people to come and see Jesus?