

“Come and See”

*“He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.”
—John 1:39*

TO SET THE SCENE FOR

the words of invitation spoken by our Lord—“Come and see”—we note the context, as recorded in John 1:28-34. John the Baptist had made the proclamation, as he saw Jesus coming to him to be baptized, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (vs. 29) Immediately following his baptism of Jesus, John was provided a visible witness of God’s Holy Spirit resting upon the Lord. “And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”—vss. 32-34

Having passed through his temptations in the wilderness victoriously, Jesus returned to the region of Galilee, where John was baptizing and preaching. (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:14) Through the power

of the Holy Spirit, Jesus understood that it would be there that his ministry was to begin. It was also to be in this locale that he would make contact with those who were to become his specially chosen apostles. It had been prophesied concerning Jesus, “The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD.” (Isa. 11:2,3) Thus, Jesus watched for the revealing of God’s will through the Holy Spirit as he began his ministry.

CALLED TO DISCIPLESHIP

Two of John the Baptist’s disciples were with him, “looking upon Jesus as he walked,” when John said again, “Behold the lamb of God!” (John 1:35,36) When the two disciples heard these words of John, “they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi [Master], . . . where dwellest thou?” (vss. 37,38) Jesus answered with the words found in our opening text. The *New International Version* translates his words, “Come, . . . and you will see.” Verse 39 continues, saying that these two disciples of John, saw where Jesus “dwelt, and abode with him that day.” It was apparently unnecessary for there to be any additional witness provided to these two in order for them to now begin following Jesus. Indeed, it was John’s own testimony that became to them the drawing power of God, as well as the fact that they were in a proper condition of heart to be receptive to his words.—John 6:44

One of the two which heard John speak, and began to follow Jesus, was Andrew. He quickly found his brother, Simon Peter, and said to him, "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." (John 1:40,41) With these two began the selection of the twelve who would be special associates of the Master—his apostles. The next day, Jesus, as he continued to travel in Galilee, "findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me." (vs. 43) Philip then found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."—vs. 45

When Nathanael heard Philip say that Jesus was from Nazareth, he at first doubted that this was the one spoken of by the prophets. Nazareth was known generally as a wicked city, and of ill repute, so Nathanael asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip replied, using the same words as found in our opening text, "Come and see." Then, as Nathanael came to meet Jesus, the Lord said concerning him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" (*New American Standard Bible*) Nathanael inquired of Jesus as to how he knew of him sufficiently to say he was an "Israelite indeed." Jesus told him that he had seen him under a fig tree before Philip had come to him. Knowing this to be true, Nathanael proclaimed, "Rabbi [Master], thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."—vss. 46-49

The foregoing Scriptures from John's Gospel describe how Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael began to follow Jesus, after having been disciples

of John the Baptist. Evidently not long after this, the Matthew account records, John was “cast into prison.” (Matt. 4:12) Jesus knew that John’s imprisonment meant that his own ministry must now fully begin. He began to preach, as John had done previously, saying, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”—vs. 17; chap. 3:1,2

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Peter and Andrew, who were still engaged in their fishing business. He called to them, saying, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.” (Matt. 4:18-20) This account is not in contradiction to the testimony of John’s Gospel, previously considered. The former was their introduction to Jesus, and where they expressed a desire to follow him. In these verses from Matthew, however, Jesus now calls them to full discipleship, to leave their nets and follow him in the way of sacrifice and complete service to the Gospel.

OUR BLESSED INVITATION

There is much for us also to learn from the words, “Come and see.” As consecrated believers in Christ, we have likewise received a call to discipleship. This grand invitation has afforded us, through the merits of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice, the privilege of communion and fellowship with him and the Heavenly Father. We have the further assurance that God is working in us, through the power and influence of the Holy Spirit, to accomplish his will in our development as a “new creature” in Christ. (II Cor. 5:17) This work involves our heart, mind, and character as we seek to be “conformed

to the image” of our Master. (Rom. 8:29) Paul says, “Wherefore, my beloved, . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12,13) What a serious and important matter is implied in these words—that the Heavenly Father himself is supervising this work, and that we must be in full cooperation with him in its accomplishment.

When we were drawn to the Master by the Heavenly Father, and subsequently invited, or called, by him to be Jesus’ disciple, we considered the matter most carefully, counting “the cost,” as the Master taught. (Luke 14:28,29) We learned that the cost would be our “all,” and like those first disciples, we would need to leave behind the “nets” of earthly hopes, aims, and ambitions. In so doing, we concluded, as Paul did: “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, . . . I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”—Phil. 3:7,8

Reckoning the “cost” to be little in comparison to the “excellency,” or superiority, of knowing Christ, we made a vow of unreserved and full consecration to do the Heavenly Father’s will. God’s will for consecrated believers during this Gospel Age has been that they present their “bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” This, we did, knowing that to do so would be only our “reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1) Upon God’s acceptance of our consecration, we entered into covenant relationship with him through Christ Jesus, and in so doing were “adopted” into his family as “sons,” by the begetting of the Holy Spirit.—Rom. 8:14-16

As children of God, through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to see into the height, depth, length, and breadth of his plan as revealed in the Bible. (Eph. 3:17-19) With confidence, we hold firmly to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and come to appreciate it more each day. (Jude 3) We rejoice that, if faithful unto death, we will be given a share in the outworking of God’s plan by being “joint-heirs” with Christ, for the purpose of blessing all the families of the earth.—Rom. 8:17; Gen. 22:16-18; 28:14

A HEAVENLY HOME

When Jesus invited Peter and Andrew to “come and see,” and they “saw where he dwelt,” it was, at most, a temporary abode of the Master. His greater purpose was that they learn where his eternal dwelling place would be, and when he would begin residing there. The night before his death, Jesus identified his eternal dwelling place as “my Father’s house.” He also said that he was going “to prepare a place” for them in the “many mansions,” or rooms, of that house. He further promised, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:1-3) Later that night, Jesus said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (chap. 18:36) By identifying his dwelling place as his “Father’s house,” and his kingdom as being “not of this world,” we are clearly shown that Christ’s eternal abode was to be in heaven, and not in any earthly dwelling.

Following his promise to the disciples that he was going to “prepare a place” for them, Jesus

added, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." (John 14:4) The "way" Jesus spoke of, which would lead them to his eternal heavenly abode and to the place he was going to prepare for them, is the "narrow way." He said "ye know" the way because he had previously spoken of it during his ministry, although they did not grasp its meaning at that time.

In his sermon on the mount, Jesus said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14) Indeed, there are few, in comparison to earth's billions, who have found this way and followed it fully. If we are of those who have found this way, and are striving to walk in it, we can rejoice in the knowledge that, even on this side of the veil, we dwell "in the secret place of the most High" and "abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Ps. 91:1) We realize daily that God's presence is with us, including his providential care in all of life's matters.

This should bring a peace and joy to us that the world does not know. Returning again to John, chapter 14, Jesus gave a further indication as to how we would find the "way" to his eternal abode of the Father's house. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (vs. 6) By faithfully walking in Jesus' "way" of sacrifice, knowing the message of "truth" which he taught, and realizing that eternal "life" is only through him, we can come "unto the Father," and dwell in his heavenly home.

On another occasion, Jesus gave these instructions to those who desired to "come and see" his

dwelling place: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) To follow Jesus by denying ourselves, and taking up our cross, means that we will undergo trials, suffering, and persecution. Although these experiences are not pleasant to the flesh, the Master told us we should "rejoice" in them, "and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. 5:11,12) Here again is emphasized the need, even in our trials, to "see" by the eye of faith the heavenly reward promised to us if we are faithful.

Many promises are given to "him that overcometh." (Rev. 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21) If we, by the grace of our Heavenly Father, are of this "little flock" of overcomers, we will be "changed" from our present condition as a spirit-begotten "new creature," tabernacled in flesh, to a divine being, "born of the Spirit" to "glory and honour and immortality." (I Cor. 15:51-53; II Cor. 5:17; John 3:8; Rom. 2:7) "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," the Apostle John wrote, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—I John 3:2

In the meantime, as we presently endure trials and go through difficult experiences, the Lord's loving interest is assured on our behalf, if we claim the promise, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28) We also have these beautiful words of comfort and encouragement from God's Old Testament servants: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." *(Continued on page 36)*

(Continued from page 31) “Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD . . . is the Rock eternal.” (Ps. 46:1; Isa. 26:4, *NIV*) The Lord is indeed a solid rock of continual strength to those who trust in his Word.

SEEING GOD’S MIGHTY POWER

We now wish to consider an incident that took place toward the end of Jesus’ earthly life which provided a great demonstration of the mighty power of God. It is also one of the most touching events that occurred during the entire period of our Lord’s ministry. It relates to Lazarus, who, along with his sisters Mary and Martha, had become close friends of Jesus, and with whom he had visited previously during his travels. The record of this important episode is found in John 11:1-44.

Martha and Mary—the same Mary who would later anoint Jesus’ feet with costly ointment—sent word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus was sick. (vss. 1-3) Upon hearing this news, Jesus said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” (vs. 4) Strangely, he “abode two days still in the same place where he was,” afterward telling his disciples, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.” These words puzzled his disciples, for they thought that if, indeed, Lazarus was sleeping, it would be best to let him rest, and not to wake him. Jesus knew, however, that he was dead. He then told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.”—vss. 6, 11-14

As Jesus neared the town of his friends, and saw Mary and others weeping, he asked, “Where have ye laid him?” to which they responded, “Lord, come

and see.” (vss. 32-34) Once again, we encounter these familiar words. On this occasion, however, rather than his disciples being directed to “come and see” Jesus, he was asked to “come and see” where the body of Lazarus was laid. How beautiful is the thought that the Master, too, was to “come and see” and be “touched with the feeling of [man’s] infirmities.” (Heb. 4:15) “Jesus wept,” the account says. (John 11:35) He wept because of the curse of sin and death which was upon mankind, and the grief he saw in the faces of the family and friends of Lazarus. He was “touched” deeply, and had great compassion for those who were sorrowing.

Jesus then spoke to Martha, “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” They took away the stone from the grave, and lifting up his eyes, Jesus said, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.” (vss. 40-42) He spoke this in acknowledgement of the Father’s power, and that he was acting as his representative, desiring that all praise and glory go to God for what was about to transpire. Jesus “cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth.” (vss. 43,44) Lazarus came forth, raised from death by God’s power. Yet, this was only an illustration of the greater and complete resurrection which will come to him and all who are “asleep” in death, when they “hear the voice of the Son of God,” and “come forth” from the grave, according to the outworking of God’s plan for man’s recovery from sin and death.—John 5:25,28,29

Christ was the “firstfruits” of the resurrection, and of “them that slept.” (I Cor. 15:20-23) In the

Apostle Paul's epistle to the brethren at Ephesus, he refers to the power of God which was exercised to raise Jesus from the dead and exalt him to his right hand. In the first chapter, he says that he is praying for them, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened to know the hope of their calling, and the working of God's "mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." This same power, Paul says, is also available "to us-ward who believe." (Eph. 1:17-22) It is because the eyes of our understanding have been enlightened that we are able to look forward, by faith, to the things "which are not seen," knowing that "the things which are not seen are eternal."—II Cor. 4:17,18

We are also reminded of Paul's admonition: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:1-3) Although our resurrection is future, we are now counted as "risen with Christ" by the fact that we have been "justified by faith" in the blood of his ransom sacrifice. (Rom. 5:1,2) Therefore, we are to focus our life on heavenly things rather than earthly, so that "by any means," we might "attain unto the resurrection of the dead."—Phil. 3:10,11

The foregoing Scriptures also allude to another reason why we should be overjoyed to know that Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God. Our many imperfections may at times discourage us, perhaps to the point where we might question our standing before the Lord. Such should not be

the case, Paul says. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” “He ever liveth to make intercession.”—Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25

THE COMFORTER

After the Passover meal and the institution of the Memorial Supper on the evening before his death, Jesus told his disciples that he was going to his Father. He then promised that he would send to them the “Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit”—“the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father.” (John 14:12,16,26; 15:26; 16:7,16) Three days later, when Mary Magdalene brought the message to the disciples from the Lord that “he is risen,” but that he had not yet ascended to his Father, they probably remembered his promise. (Matt. 28:5-10; Luke 24:6-10; John 20:11-18) However, they did not yet comprehend its meaning. It would not be possible for them to do so until it was fulfilled, and they had actually received the Holy Spirit to enlighten them and “bring all things” to their “remembrance.”

Subsequent to the Day of Pentecost, and their begetting of the Holy Spirit, the apostles understood and began teaching many things they had not previously comprehended. One of these is the hope of consecrated followers of Jesus that, if faithful unto death, they will live and reign with him in God’s kingdom. “If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him,” and be “glorified together.” (II Tim. 2:11,12; Rom. 8:17) The apostles also recognized,

however, that the fulfillment of this promise would not take place until the Master returned at his Second Advent. Thus, Jesus' pledge that he would "come again, and receive" them and all his faithful people unto himself, was now the basis of a most blessed hope.

Another doctrine the apostles understood following Pentecost was that the church's heavenly hope, as well as the prospect for man's recovery to earthly perfection, depended upon the resurrection of the dead. They recognized the fact that all mankind would be eternally lost in death, "if the dead rise not." (I Cor. 15:16-18) The apostles now saw that by the death of Jesus, and his subsequent resurrection by the "mighty power" of God, the resurrection of both the church and the world—"every man in his own order"—was made possible.—vs. 23

In the present harvest period of the Gospel Age, these same truths should fill our minds and inspire our hearts, as we call to remembrance that he who said he was the "resurrection, and the life" could not be held in the grave, but was "raised up" by God, who "loosed the pains of death." (John 11:25; Acts 2:24) How we rejoice in the evidences that he who was made alive in the Spirit, and appeared in the presence of God for us, has now returned and is invisibly present. (Heb. 9:24) Soon, if faithful, we will have the joy of being with him in glory.

When standing before the high priest, who asked if he was "the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus replied, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power." (Matt. 26:63,64; Mark 14:61,62) Following his resurrection, just prior to his ascension, he told his disciples, "ye shall be

witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, . . . and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) After speaking these things, “he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” (vs. 9) “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil 2:9-11

“GREATER THINGS”

Returning our thoughts once again to Jesus’ early encounter with Nathanael, we recall again the Master’s words, “Behold an Israelite indeed!” Following Nathanael’s confession of faith that Jesus was the “Son of God,” the Lord assured him that what he had already come to appreciate was insignificant in comparison to the still “greater things” which he would come to know and understand. (John 1:50) Through his honesty of heart Nathanael was drawn to the Lord, and when later begotten with the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, he would be able to grow fully in the Master’s character likeness—one of the most important “greater things” of his discipleship.

Is this not also true of us? The joy, confidence, trust, and hope that filled our hearts at the beginning of our walk has increased as we have attained a greater understanding of his glorious plan of the ages and a clearer recognition of the Lord’s leadings in our life. What we first saw and enjoyed of God’s favor has grown and developed more fully. We have been led to greater riches of his grace, kindness,

and tender mercies through his providences and by the enlightening of our spiritual vision through the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. With confidence in the Lord, we can take unto ourselves “the whole armour of God,” so that we are able to “withstand in the evil day, . . . Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”—Eph. 6:13-18

Walking in the light of the divine plan as it continues to unfold, we see that soon Christ and his bride, the church, will constitute the “holy city, new Jerusalem,” which will, symbolically speaking, come “down from God out of heaven,” for the purpose of educating and blessing the world of mankind in the earthly portion of God’s kingdom. (Rev. 21:1,2) During the Messianic Age, “the Christ” will serve as the “mediator between God and men,” because it is God’s desire for “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (I Tim. 2:4,5) Even so now the elect, “first fruits” are being gathered as “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” by means of the “first resurrection,” in which they are “changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”—Rom. 8:17; Rev. 14:4; 20:6; I Cor. 15:51,52

If we are faithful to our vows of consecration, we will realize the grand and complete answer to the question asked of the Lord by his disciples so many years ago—“where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see.” For the most part, “the world knew him not,” but to those who did, “to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” (John 1:10-12) The same is true of us. “The world

knoweth us not, because it knew him not,” but the Lord “knoweth them that are his.” Thus, with joy we can say with the Apostle John, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . . . We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”—I John 3:1,2; II Tim. 2:19 ■