

The mega promise -7 days of revelation of Jesus: 5, 6

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Date: 22 May 2022

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[0:00] And it talks about the world. He came to us to save us. And I think there's another W. Wow. Amazing.! And from Daniel's talks, he helpfully told us,! It's all about Christ! It's not about me, John the Baptist said. It's about him.

John points to Jesus. And we saw this enigmatic title in John's Gospel, the Lamb of God, which points to what Jesus is going to do. And we'll see through John's Gospel, there are many different titles for Jesus.

Some of them quite enigmatic. And last week, we saw two of John the Baptist's followers leave him and follow Jesus. Andrew and Peter, brothers.

Come and see, go and tell. Remember that? Last week, Daniel encouraged us. I wonder, this last week, have you had the chance to come and see, go and tell?

Other people about the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, Peter and Andrew had that awesome privilege of spending time in the house with the creator of the cosmos, who threw stars into space.

[1:09] And their eyes had been opened. They had found the Messiah. It's incredible. So we get to this point in John's Gospel. And we say, can it get any greater?

Can it get any better? Surely? No. Well, let's see. Let's see in John's Gospel. Well, as you read in this portion, please turn to it.

There's a lot of parallels, isn't there, to the previous text. It somewhat mirrors it with two disciples being called by Jesus. Another day comes.

But there are differences with this text. And we're going to find out more things about who Jesus is. And at the end, you'll see a mega promise. That's why I've entitled this, a mega promise, which I hope will excite us today.

The mega promise. Well, places have a meaning, don't they? Associations. Positive. Negative. Connotations. Connections.

[2:18] History. Icons. They can be stereotyped by people. The media. Sometimes wrongly. So if I said Liverpool, or Liverpool, you might think of the 1960s.

The Beatles. The famous football club. The Mersey River. Perhaps if you're a Christian, JC Royal. A distinct accent. Scousers.

Well, if I said Dortmund, and perhaps you're German here today, you might think of the Westfalia Stadium, where Borussia Dortmund play.

Or Westfalen Park, marked with an observation tower. A famous location. You do have to pay there to go, by the way. Or perhaps the U Tower in Dortmund.

Well, places have associations, don't they? They have meaning. A history. Well, here in this passage, it's the same. There are some places, and they all have meaning.

[3:20] They have overtones of the past. Connections and associations. Please look at the text with me. The first one is Bethsaida.

In verse 44. Because Andrew and Peter were from the town of Bethsaida, like Philip. Now, Bethsaida means fish town.

Or hunt town. Literally, house of fish, I guess. Or house of hunting. So, as you can see on the slide, here it is.

I don't know if you can see it there. Bethsaida. It's in the northeastern regions, by the Sea of Galilee. And this is where Jesus is with his disciples.

And so, picture it. Philip, Andrew, Peter. They're from here. We know the brothers were fishermen. And most likely, Philip as well.

[4:21] Because he is from this town. Like Brighton, like ourselves. Was it Bright Helm, it was called? An original fishing hamlet. Inhabited by fishing folk.

Sorry. Bright Helmstone. Thank you, Steve. Yeah. You're a native, I'm not. So, here, Bethsaida, the fishing town.

We're not sure that it definitely was there. But perhaps it was. And Jesus finds Philip and says, follow me. In verse 43. Isn't it wonderful that Jesus finds Philip?

He seeks him. This reminds me of the parable of the lost sheep. He goes to find the lost sheep. He has him in mind to be a disciple. Isn't it the same with us?

He goes and finds us lost sheep. He calls us to be his worshippers. And note that in God's sovereign plan, he goes and chooses ordinary folk like you and me.

[5:27] Not the kings and the queens, the leaders. He says, ordinary folk for his grand purposes. He chooses you as well.

However, did you see in verse 45 that he actually says, we have found the one Moses found about in the law. He says, we found Jesus.

He puts the other way around. You can sense the excitement, can't you, brothers and sisters? He's found Jesus. The Messiah. And then, as you can see, he goes to Nathanael and says to him, we've seen him.

We've seen Jesus of Nazareth, the king of Israel. Well, actually, he says something else, doesn't he? Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. It's amazing.

God opens Philip's eyes. He sees and believes in Jesus. He's given faith. However, there is another side of the coin. There is testimony to believe in Jesus.

[6:43] So my first point is Revelation 1. He's in the book. He's in the book. Verse 43 to 46.

So, Philip says to Nathanael, we found the one Moses wrote about in the law and about whom the prophets also wrote.

Moses, the person who God chose to lead his people out of slavery into the desert for 40 years. The one of whom God spoke to directly, who represented the people. The one who was rescued from murder in a basket. The writer of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.

The law. We have found the one that the Mosaic Covenant was pointing to. One of our great leaders, who never managed to get over here to the promised land.

[7:49] He only saw it afar from a distance. He pointed to this man here in Galilee. The whole sacrificial system, the temple system, which came about.

The tabernacle, which Moses wrote about, shows that the blood of animals could not fully deal with humanity's problem of sin.

It was a signpost to the one who would fully obey the law and make amends for our sin. All the promises that God made, that Moses wrote down, point to this man here in Galilee.

All the types in the shadows. Creation. The fall of mankind in the garden. The need of redemption. Noah and the flood.

That amazing, saving grace. Abraham and his seed. Isaac. Jacob. Joseph. And Moses himself, the servant leader.

[8:54] They were all a foreshadow of Christ to this man. He's in the book, Philip. He's here in town. All scripture points to this Jew.

The history books. The wisdom books. And as we saw, the prophets point to this one. Nathaniel. He's right here in Galilee. The servant from Isaiah.

The branch from Zechariah. The anointed one. From Psalm 2. They would have known the Jewish scriptures. He's in the book.

It points to this person. What another wow moment in John's gospel. The whole gamut of writing, stretching hundreds of years, points to this man in our midst.

What a privilege those fishermen had. And the revelation is for us as well. Ordinary men, Jews, would have known their Torah.

[10:07] The rabbis would have taught them the law and the scriptures. They would have known their rich history of God's dealing with them as a nation. They were waiting for a savior. And he's here in Galilee.

In our region. Fishtown, Bethsaida. Here he comes. To two fishermen. And opens their eyes. Jesus comes to fulfill the law and the prophets.

John 5.39. These are the scriptures that testify about me. Without them, these Galileans wouldn't have known about Jesus.

Philip wouldn't have realized who Jesus was. He's in the book. There are so many scriptures that point to this man.

Types and shadows that are seen in this man. There is proof here in Holy Scripture. Nonetheless, these men did see dimly, didn't they?

[11:17] They didn't know what Jesus was going to do. Not the whole picture. The picture's coming together. But Philip did recognize that he was the son of Joseph in the messianic line.

He had faith in the son of man. But that wasn't believing without testimony. The scriptures testify to this man. There is human responsibility.

He's in the book. Well, let's apply that to us. We don't believe blindly, do we? We have the facts right here in front of us.

And we should be reading this book. My neighbor said, Mark, this is just a book. Why would you believe it? Written by perhaps one man who invented a religion.

But no. This was written by many diverse people over many years writing in different styles. It's not just a book. It's a book like another as we've been hearing about this morning from Roger at Good News for Everyone.

[12:31] We want to place it in the highways and byways of society. It's powerful. It reveals who Jesus is. For us, we have the bigger book, don't we?

We have the New Testament as well. We have a fuller revelation. And it all points to this man. He's in the book. Are you reading it?

Jesus fulfills what was said in the past. We have the evidence of the gospel writers as well as the apostles about who Jesus is.

And we will see through John's gospel his character, his power over creation. Next week, Steve's going to show us his next, no, sorry, his first miracle.

What a privilege for us here. Are you hungry to read God's book? Revelation 1, he's in the book. Well, there's an objection, isn't there?

[13:33] Nazareth? Can anything come good coming of Nazareth? Wait a minute, says Nathaniel. Jesus of Nazareth? There's no mention of this place in the Old Testament.

The Messiah. Surely he can't come from here. He's got a good point. It's not Judea. The famous places like Jerusalem, Bethlehem.

It's Nazareth and Galilee. A small town of 2,000 ethnically diverse people, not pure Jew. Seems to have a bad reputation as well as a strange accent.

Nothing, surely, good can come from there. Yes, but Nathaniel had not known, had he? Jesus wasn't born there. He was born in Bethlehem where the Messiah was to be born.

Read it in Micah 5, verse 2. Jesus spent most of his life in Nazareth, in obscurity, 30 years roughly. Like I would say, I'm from Brighton.

[14:36] I wasn't born here. Steve's shaking his head. Steve's really a Brightonian. I was born in Salisbury. I don't say I'm from Salisbury. I didn't grow up there.

I was just born there. And I know hardly anything about the place. But I've lived here most of my life. Perhaps you're an unbeliever here today and perhaps you are skeptical like Nathaniel about who Jesus is.

Well, come and see as we see here in the text. Come and see. Study the scriptures to see if he really is the Messiah. Come to these services during this month, these months to read John's

gospel.

Look at the facts. There are people here who would love to read the Bible with you. John's gospel. Me being one of them. Why not read John's gospel by yourself or with someone else and find out who Jesus is.

Please come and see me if you'd like to do that. There's a really good resource here. The Word One-to-One. A guide through John's gospel. Good for us to use this resource. And let's pray for Jewish people, shouldn't we?

[15:50] Jesus came for the Jews first, didn't he? They have the blessing as we've been thinking of the Old Testament writings. Let's pray that God would open their hearts like they did with these disciples.

Like the Apostle Paul to see that Jesus is the fulfillment of Moses and the prophets. So, second point.

he knows all about you. Look at verses 47 to 49. Jesus knows all about Nathanael. Do you notice that in verse 47?

He says he is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit, no guile, no craftiness, not a deceiver. Did you note the graciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ here?

That he doesn't rebuke him for his skepticism or lack of faith but deals graciously with Nathanael. Jacob in the Old Testament one of the patriarchs later to be called Israel was the deceiver.

[17:07] Remember that? His name? The crafty one? That's what Jacob means. But God graciously molded Jacob through his life to become a godly upright man.

Nathanael was like a Jacob. He knows all about him, his life. He knows as we can see from the text that he was under the fig tree before Philip called him.

Wow! He knows everything about you. And for him this proves that he is the son of God. Similarly we're going to see with the Samaritan woman at the well chapter 4 Jesus knows all about history doesn't he?

All about her history all about her the five husbands she's had and the partner she is cohabitating with at that time. He knows all about you.

Isn't it amazing that God knows all about us? He knows our joys our sufferings our hurt our pain our longings our needs our besetting sins he knows us better than ourselves and he deals lovingly towards us.

[18:25] We can't hide from him can we? We can't be crafty with God he sees everything let's be open and honest with him and come to him and this should stop us from wantonly going against him shouldn't it?

to hold short accounts with him he knows all about you brothers and sisters friends and here we come to the next point Revelation 2 he'll show greater things mega things verse 50 and 51 let's read Jesus said you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree you will see greater things than that he then added very truly I tell you you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man this is quite enigmatic isn't it as we read this what does this mean in verse 51 well as we read in Genesis 28 this refers back to

Jacob's dream when Jacob was on that journey to Haran looking for a wife and fleeing from his brother he in his sleep sees this amazing vision in which he sees a stairway resting on earth with its top reaching to heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending on it he sees the Lord Yahweh stood above it or beside him and he gives him Jacob some lovely assurances and promises did you see that flip back to Genesis 28 if you can verse 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go and I will bring you back into this land

I will not leave you until I have done what I promised your descendants will be like the dust of the earth and you'll spread out to the east and west all peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring this is a remarkable account isn't it brothers and sisters of Jacob and God Bethel the house of God here we see mega things and in verse 17 as well how awesome is this place Jacob says this is none other than the house of God Bethel this is the gate of heaven God's house God reveals himself to Jacob what a fantastic moment what a privilege a blessing from God Jacob has here and turning back to

John surely these disciples have a mega moment a mega promise that the Messiah is with them do you notice in verse 51 Jesus tells his disciples you it's the plural verily verily or in our text very truly whenever John writes this something important is about to be said it's used a lot by John we'll see it

I tell you you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man Nathaniel would have known this famous story from Genesis the story of Bethel what is Jesus telling them and telling us even greater things are going to happen folks I am the gateway or the house of God right here in front of them they have the blessing the son of man verse 51 this refers to his humanity and the son of

[22:58] God refers to his divinity the house of God has come down from earth to heaven and you fishermen are going to see greater things yet to come Jacob saw amazing things it's wonderful vision but Jacob pointed to greater things to come he was a shadow of these great things you haven't seen anything yet you are going to see my power manifest in signs and wonders that are going to amaze you you you'll see water changing into wine you'll see the feeding of thousands with a few fish and pieces of bread you'll see me help you on a fishing trip and I'm going to haul in fish like you've never seen before in

Bethsaida you'll see me calm a storm with a word you'll see demons fleeing from people from people who are cursed people being healed of diseases you're going to see mega things a child and a man being brought back from the dead Nathaniel Philip disciples you are going to see heaven open much greater than me knowing you were under a fig tree Nathaniel I'm going to reveal God's glory to you I'm going to reveal what all the Old Testament writers said in me you're going to see this being accomplished great things are about to happen guys what about us standing here sitting here well aren't we even more privileged than those fisher folk we can see behold great things because of what the king of

Israel has done for us we can marvel and stand amazed at Jesus the Nazarene we have his full revelation his word in the Bible we have by his spirit we have Jesus with us we can look back and we can marvel at what he's done on the cross for us!

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me a sinner condemned unclean how marvelous how wonderful and my song shall ever be praise God brothers and sisters that he has revealed these things to us don't we have a greater revelation and let's pray as we walk through this gospel of John that we would see heaven open and we would see more and more of who Jesus is what God is doing that we would be encouraged and that we would pause and stand back and awe at Jesus that we would believe in him like Nathaniel and see great things true greatness is in this king of

Israel and we have seen greater things we've seen his mega promises fulfilled we've seen the nations come to Jesus we see this in our midst don't we people from Spain people from Germany coming to the Lord from 12 disciples to hundreds thousands millions of folk following the Lord Jesus people from all different countries various backgrounds we have seen great things and we are continuing to see God's purpose being fulfilled!

[27:17] That's exciting isn't it? And we look forward to a mega promise don't we? that John gives in his revelation in the last book a day that will be better than Bethel a perfect house the new Jerusalem seeing Jesus face to face we will see greater things than at present!

have have something to look forward to brothers and sisters!

when with with the hands in glory his face at last I shall see may I encourage you this week as I close that we have seen truly great things this morning in our midst and this is just the tip of the iceberg come back next week and we are going to see a mega event at a wedding there are incredible things that lie ahead as we read this book as we journey through life's struggles may you keep believing in God keep believing in his mega promises just like Nathaniel and Philip we are Christ's disciples and if we follow him!

then we will see let's pray and I'll hand over to David