

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XXVI. Christ's Proto-Missionary Ministry In Samaria
(John 4:4-42)

I. Introduction

- A. When Jesus ministered in His earthly life, He said that He had not been sent to the Gentiles, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:23-24), and He sent His disciples only to Hebrews (Matthew 10:5-6).
- B. Thus, the sudden shift of the risen Christ's call that His disciples disciple all nations in Matthew 28:16-20 might seem almost artificial unless there is evidence that He had always intended to disciple the world.
- C. The evidence for Christ's intent always to disciple the world is given in His ministry in Samaria as recorded relatively early in His earthly ministry in John 4:4-42, so we view this passage for our insight and application:

II. Christ's Proto-Missionary Ministry In Samaria, John 4:4-42.

- A. Jesus first presented Himself as a gracious Hebrew man, John 4:4-9:
 - 1. Though the Hebrews usually avoided Samaria due to its religiously compromised Samaritans who lived there (2 Kings 17:24-41), in leaving Judaea for Galilee, Jesus felt compelled to go through Samaria, v. 3-4.
 - 2. When He arrived at Jacob's well on the edge of Mount Gerizim near the town of Sychar, He sat down on the well's shoulder to rest in the heat of the day while His disciples went into Sychar for food, Jn. 4:5-6, 8.
 - 3. A woman of Samaria then came out in the heat to fetch water from the well, what a woman who was a social outcast would do, and when she arrived, Jesus asked her to draw water for Him to drink, John 4:7.
 - 4. Stunned that a Jewish man would ask her as a Samaritan woman to drink from her vessel, what she knew would make Him ritually unclean in His circles, she asked Him why He had asked her for a drink, Jn. 4:9.
- B. Jesus then presented Himself as a gracious Hebrew prophet, John 4:10-19:
 - 1. The Lord answered that if she had known Who it was Who asked for a drink, she would have asked of Him and He would have given her "living" water, John 4:10. The Hebrew word "living" (*hayyim*) is used figuratively in several Old Testament passages (Genesis 26:19; Leviticus 14:4, et al.; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 310-311) for running water, so she thought Jesus meant running water, v. 11-12.
 - 2. When she asked how He could give better running water than Jacob (v. 11-12) with his well, Jesus said that He meant spiritual water that would forever quench her thirst and be an artesian well in her, v. 13-14.
 - 3. When the woman asked for Jesus' water, He told her to go get her husband and return to Him, v. 15-16.
 - 4. She claimed that she had no husband, and Jesus then told her of her long, troubled marital history, and that the man she was then with was not her husband, so she perceived that He was a prophet, John 4:17-19.
- C. Jesus next presented Himself as the gracious Hebrew Messiah, John 4:20-29:
 - 1. When the woman acknowledged Jesus to be a prophet, she mentioned the different belief of her people and of the Hebrews as to where God was to be worshipped – on nearby Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem, v. 20.
 - 2. Jesus then taught about true worship that did not focus on one's location, but that came from the heart in spirit and in truth, and she mentioned that when Messiah came, He would teach them like He did, v. 21-25.
 - 3. The Lord replied that He Who was speaking to her was that Messiah (v. 26), what left the woman stunned so that she left her pot unfilled and returned to Sychar to tell the towns people about Him, John 4:27-28.
- D. Jesus finally presented Himself as the gracious Savior of the world, John 4:30-42:
 - 1. Jesus presented Himself as the gracious Savior of the world to His disciples, John 4:30-38: The disciples arrived as the woman left for the town, so Jesus proceeded to teach the disciples to consider outreach even to non-Hebrew Samaritans in preparation for missions in the Church. The fields of the whole world, not just Israel, were already ripe unto harvest, and Jesus was sending them into His harvest field, Jn. 4:30-38.
 - 2. Jesus presented Himself as the gracious Savior of the world to the Samaritans, John 4:39-42: When the woman brought her associates out to meet Jesus, and they invited Him to stay with them, He stayed two days there and led them to believe that he was indeed the Savior of the world!

Lesson: *In a series of gentle steps, moving from the known to the unknown, Jesus disciplined a spiritually ignorant, destitute, despised Samaritan woman by first presenting Himself as a gracious Hebrew man, then as a gracious Hebrew prophet, then as the gracious Messiah and finally as the gracious Savior of the world. He used this event to begin to teach His disciples, and later the Church by way of application, the importance of worldwide outreach.*

Application: *(1) May we acknowledge the truth that worldwide outreach is a top priority with the Lord. (2) In discipling others, may we follow Jesus' example of gradually, graciously, leading the lost to faith in Jesus Christ.*