

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XXVII. Christ's Guidance On Worldwide Discipling
(John 4:31-38)

I. Introduction

- A. Christ's proto-missionary ministry in Samaria, what foreshadows the coming worldwide discipling ministry of the Church, has in His comments to His disciples in John 4:31-38 the basic spiritual principles of that work.
- B. We thus view the passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Christ's Guidance On Worldwide Discipling, John 4:31-38.

- A. Christ displayed wholehearted devotion to the discipling of the world, John 4:31-34:
 - 1. After Christ's disciples returned from Sychar with food (John 4:5, 8, 27a), they urged Him to eat (John 4:31), but Jesus replied that He had food about which they did not know, John 4:32.
 - 2. He explained that His "food" was to do the will of God the Father Who had sent Him and to complete His work, John 4:33. His motivation for discipling the non-Hebrew Samaritans was greater than eating food!
- B. Christ displayed a grasp of the great need in the discipling of the world, John 4:35:
 - 1. The reference Jesus made about saying that the fields needed four more months before harvesting "was probably a local proverb," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 287.
 - 2. However, He countered that the fields were already white unto harvest: "The Samaritans in their white garments coming from the village (v. 30) may have visually suggested a wheat field ripe for harvest," Ibid.
- C. Christ displayed the long-term teamwork needed in the discipling of the world, John 4:36-38:
 - 1. Jesus noted that He as the Reaper received wages in gathering the harvested souls in worldwide discipling, He along with the sower would rejoice together though they performed different functions, John 4:36-37.
 - 2. Christ added that He had sent His disciples to reap in Samaria where they had not labored, what was true not only in Christ's outreach that day, but also in the Church's later outreach there, cf. Acts 8:4-25.
 - 3. However, others had labored in "sowing" for a Samaritan harvest, and the disciples were entered into their labors in long-term ministry, John 4:38. Old Testament history explains this claim by Jesus (as follows):
 - a. The Samaritan woman had told Jesus that when Messiah came, He would tell them all things, a remark that gave Jesus occasion to tell her that He was the Messiah, leading to the discipling of Samaria, v. 25-28.
 - b. The facts she knew and stated in her remark were the product of the labors of three of Israel's forefathers:
 - i. The Samaritans regarded the Pentateuch, that is, Moses' writings of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, as God's inspired Word (Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., vol. Five, p. 246), so they would have believed all that was written in these five books of the Old Testament.
 - ii. The Samaritan woman had mentioned Jacob's well in John 4:12, what Israel's forefather Jacob had labored to dig when he purchased the plot of land near Shechem 1,980 years before Jesus' earthly ministry as recorded in Genesis 33:18-20. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 2021)
 - iii. In addition, Jacob's blessing to his sons included his prediction in Genesis 49:1, 8-10 that his son Judah would be the ancestor of the Messiah Who would bear the scepter to Whom the "peoples" of the **whole world** would gather (H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, 1974, vol. II, p. 1178-1179)
 - iv. During the Exodus, Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 had predicted that when the Prophet Who would be that Messiah would come, God would hold Israel's people responsible to heed Him.
 - v. So, the labors of **Jacob** who bought the plot near Shechem and dug its well, the labors of **Judah** to sire the kings through whose line the Samaritans believed Messiah would come based on Jacob's prophecy, and the labors of **Moses** and Jacob to predict the arrival of Messiah as the Prophet to Whom Israel and the world were to heed, had paved the way as "sowers" for the Samaritans to believe in a coming Messiah Who would declare all things unto them. These forefathers as "sowers" had paved the way for the "reapers" in Jesus Christ and the Church to finish the "harvest" of the Samaritans nearly 2,000 years after Jacob had begun the "sowing" work and Moses had finished the "sowing" work 600 years later, which was 1400 years before Christ's work at Samaria!

Lesson: *Jesus displayed the wholehearted devotion, the grasp of the great need, and the long-term teamwork needed to disciple the world in God's plan for worldwide discipleship in the Church era.*

Application: *May we heed the example of our Lord at Samaria to have wholehearted devotion, to grasp the great need and appreciate the long-term teamwork needed in ministry to disciple the world for Jesus Christ.*