

Stage III. The Early Judean Ministry

B. The First Glorious Week of Disciple-Making

3. Day Three: The First Three Disciples Believe in Jesus

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #033

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35 On the next day, John was once again standing there with two of his disciples. (36) Because he had seen Jesus, as he was passing by, he said, "Look, the LAMB OF GOD!" (37) The two disciples of John heard him saying this, and they followed Jesus.

38 Turning around, Jesus looked deep into them as they were following him and said to them, "*What are you really seeking after?*"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you making your home?"

39 "*I command you to come,*" he said, "*and you will see.*"

So they went and took a good look at where he was staying, and they remained in fellowship with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him,

"We have truly found the Messiah, for real!" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "*You are presently called Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas*" (which, when translated, is Peter, or "Rock").

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

| | CONTEXT DIGEST |
|---------------------|--|
| Location | Bethany, on the East Side of the Jordan River |
| Timeline | Mid-March, 30 AD (Month Two) |
| Jesus' Life Context | Stage III: The Early Judean Ministry |
| | B. The First Glorious Week of Disciple-Making |
| Title | 3. Day Three: The First Three Disciples Believe in Jesus |

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COMMENT:

Today's reading shows us John's masterful use of symbolism and repetition in his narrative style. It was day three in the first week of Jesus' disciple-making. John called attention to this by writing, "on the next day" at the beginning of the section. On this third day the first three people believed in Jesus as the Messiah to become his disciples. This makes the third day especially important.

John will use the term "on the third day" again, later on in "week one" to continue his emphasis. The full significance of this phrase will become clear at the end of his gospel, when Jesus rises from the dead "on the third day." John's repetition of these words at key points in the story builds up the impact of Jesus' resurrection as the climax of the Messiah's life and ministry.

Faith in Jesus as the Messiah meant that each of these first three believers simultaneously became his "disciples," or "learners." On the fourth day of this week two more people will join his band of disciples. This first week was a classic example of the personal evangelism and discipleship training process that was the heart of Jesus' ministry during his six months in Judea.

The story of the way Jesus made his first five disciples is important for another reason. ALL people believe and follow Jesus through the same process as the first five disciples. So the example of the first five directly applies to everyone who believes in him. John's goal in writing his gospel was for his readers to believe and follow him in discipleship, just like the first five.

How did it happen? Let's trace the process. Each of the first three were led to the portal of faith in Jesus through the testimony of John the Immerser, who was witnessing about Jesus on the basis of Isaiah, and the rest of the Old Testament promises about the Messiah. In other words, the testimony of Scripture about Jesus led to faith for the Immerser, who then told others about what he had seen and heard about the Messiah from the Word of God, and his own confirming experience. God uses the testimony of Scripture (especially the Gospels), and the witness of believers (like John the Immerser), to bring us to the door of faith.

We see the role of witnessing in the way Andrew, one of the first two disciples to begin following Jesus, immediately went to his brother Simon to share the good news. Once Andrew was sure he had found the Messiah in Jesus, he not only testified to Simon, he also brought him to Jesus to see for himself.

In addition to the role of the Scriptures and personal witnessing, Jesus himself worked in the hearts of each of these first disciples to draw them into faith. He personally revealed himself to them. That is what brought each of them to the point of a total life-commitment to him as their Lord and Savior. True faith is a definite decision involving the commitment of our entire personality--mind, will and desire--to the person or thing we believe in. Their decision to believe in Jesus was the result of their direct interaction with him.

We will see the same combination of Scripture, witnessing, and personal interaction with Jesus working together in the conversion of Phillip and Nathanael on day four. These three ingredients continue to make up the recipe for conversion today. The first five disciples personally encountered Jesus in the flesh. Since Pentecost, Jesus interacts with us through the Holy Spirit, who convinces us that the truths in the Scriptures and the testimony of believers applies to us, too. Without this work of Jesus through His Spirit in our inner being, no one believes in him with their whole heart.

Because the example of these first disciples is so important for each of us, too, I encourage you to click on the three links in the text that underline the words of Jesus. These statements merit special attention because they reveal the way he works in the life of every person who believes in him.

The third day of the first glorious week of disciple-making marked the first fruit of Jesus' Messianic ministry. Just three new disciples were born that day. However, they were the first of billions of people who have since

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become his disciples, all of them through the threefold power of Scripture, the witness of believers, and personal interaction with the living Jesus by his Spirit.

APPLICATION:

Jesus first "saw" each of these disciples. He loved them enough to take the time to know them, long before any of them knew anything about him. He knew everything about them, as only God can do, before he revealed himself to them and drew them into faith.

He sees each of us, and knows each of us in the same way. Therefore we can have confidence to "come" to him by faith. He has already seen everything that keeps us from him--all of our sin and failure in advance--and yet he has chosen us for himself anyway. This is love--God's own kind of love.

Along with coming to Jesus, we can also witness to other people with the same confidence. We know that Jesus will receive anybody who comes to him by faith, because he has already received us, in spite of knowing everything about us in advance.

Because we have been foreknown by Jesus and have come to know him, we should make him known to others, too.

Who can you share your witness with today?

What disciple can you encourage in their faith today?

How will you do this?