

Stage III. The Early Judean Ministry

E. Jesus Makes Disciples in Samaria

6. Jesus Engages in Discipleship Training in Sychar

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39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony: "He told me everything I ever did."

40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they kept on asking him to abide with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more people became believers because of his own teaching.

42 They kept on saying to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard him in a decisive way for ourselves, and we know for sure that this One truly is the Savior of the world."

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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	Sychar in Samaria
Timeline	August 30 AD (Month seven)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage III: The Early Judean Ministry
	E. Jesus Makes Disciples in Samaria
Title	6. Jesus Engages in Discipleship Training in Sychar

COMMENT:

Jesus' fruitful time of ministry in Sychar created the perfect transition into his roughly two year period of ministry focused in Galilee. Jesus gives us a stellar lesson in evangelism strategy and methodology through his example in Judea, Samaria, and then Galilee. Make sure you see this.

Effective outreach balances two different kinds of evangelism, that both feed off of each other. Jesus deliberately used both approaches simultaneously throughout his ministry. What are the two kinds of evangelism?

We have seen that during his Early Judean Ministry, Jesus focused on personal evangelism; the multiplication of disciples through witnessing to individuals, leading them to faith in him, and then training them to reach out in turn with their own witness. This process multiplied disciples, even as it focused on individuals. This strategy is not based on preaching to groups of people. It is built upon personal conversations with individuals. This is the first kind of evangelism we saw in the example of Jesus.

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However, during the Early Judean period Jesus was also associated with the second kind of evangelism: publicly proclaiming the gospel to groups of people, or mass evangelism. Because the ministry of John the Immerser featured this second kind of evangelism, and because John's public preaching preceded the beginning of Jesus' own ministry by roughly six months, Jesus chose to coordinate and associate himself with John's mass evangelism, without engaging in it himself. He refused to compete with John in any way.

So John preached, and constantly sent a stream of seekers...the fruit of his public preaching...to Jesus for further ministry through personal evangelism. Jesus' evangelistic ministry in Judea utilized both kinds of evangelism in perfect balance, while HE personally focused on evangelism and discipleship training with individuals.

As we have seen, when Jesus sensed public perception of competition with John the Baptizer, he quickly decided to relocate his ministry to Galilee, so that the unity and excellent cooperation between the two of them would be maintained.

During Jesus' ministry in Sychar he began with personal evangelism of the woman at the well. As soon as she believed in Jesus the woman began to witness in her town, and the multiplication process started to develop. However, as she brought crowds of people to Jesus from the town, Jesus then began to engage in mass evangelism, too. He proclaimed the gospel to the crowd.

Jesus also enlisted his disciples to engage in personal evangelism under his supervision. Here we see Jesus personally engaging in both types of evangelism himself ...simultaneously. There was no need for Jesus to be careful to avoid perceptions of competition with John the Baptizer anymore. He was ready to take his ministry to another level of effectiveness by actively engaging in both personal and mass evangelism himself.

The conclusion of the Early Judean Ministry period was capped off in Sychar by a very important confession of faith in Jesus. The Samaritan woman, and everyone else in Sychar who believed in Jesus discovered that HE was truly **"the Savior of the world."** This is a gigantic confession of faith. The use of the definite article in the original Greek means that Jesus is the ONLY world-Savior, in addition to being the TOTAL world-Savior. It would be many years before the Jewish believers were able to make this confession with the same degree of conviction that the "pagan" Samaritans were already able to enjoy.

This scene with Jesus remaining in Sychar for several days to "abide" with his new disciples in fellowship and training marks the end of Jesus' early period of ministry in Judea, in which was so closely associated with John the Immerser. Jesus was poised to enter Galilee, and preach the gospel to the masses there with a power and acclaim that the Immerser had never known. Healing and exorcisms would attend his preaching now, and huge crowds of people would flock to him from all over the region.

"Galilee of the Gentiles" would never be the same. Jesus the Messiah was coming!

APPLICATION:

Like Jesus, we need to combine both kinds of evangelism in our own ministry as his witnesses. That is, we should constantly be nurturing the multiplication of disciples through our own personal evangelism and discipleship training, while we also participate in mass evangelism as well. The best way to do this is through our own local church. We should seek to bring the individuals we are personally reaching out to in evangelism every week to church gatherings to hear the gospel there.

Jesus designed evangelism to work like a bicycle, with two wheels in perfect coordination: personal evangelism, and mass evangelism. When we engage in both kinds simultaneously, like Jesus did, we will see consistent growth through multiplication.

Are you practicing both kinds of evangelism? Which kind is easier for you? What do you need to do in order to achieve greater balance? How will you begin to do that today?