

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## JOHN 3.22-36



**T. M. Moore**

*A Scriptorium Study*

*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,*

*He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

The Gospel of John: John 3.22-36  
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## Introduction to *John 3.22-26*

Jesus said that of all the men born of women, John the Baptist was the greatest. In this brief exchange between John and certain of his disciples, we just why.

John was courageous, faithful, and humble as a witness for the Lord. We can learn much about following Jesus by observing and listening to John, as we will do in these closing verses of John 3.

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## 1 Confusion over Baptism

*Read and meditate on John 3.22-26.*

An early challenge to Jesus' ministry arises, focusing on John the Baptist and his work. To some, it seemed Jesus was shoving the Baptist aside. Those who had committed themselves to the Lord under John's ministry were understandably concerned.

*<sup>22</sup>Now some time after this came Jesus to the land of Judah, His disciples being with Him. They remained there, and together baptized all who came to them. <sup>23</sup>Now John was also baptizing in Aenon, near Salim, because there being much water there, and people came and were baptized by him. <sup>24</sup>(And this occurred before John was imprisoned.) <sup>25</sup>Then an argument arose, involving John's disciples and some Jews, concerning baptism. <sup>26</sup>They came to John and said, "The Man, the very same One Who beyond the Jordan was with you – concerning Whom you testified – He, too, is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"*

- John 3.22-26

*Reflect*

1. John's followers might have seen Jesus as a challenge to John and his ministry. Do leadership conflicts ever arise in churches today? What kinds? How do we typically handle them? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I pray for the leaders of our church, that...*

2. Jesus' disciples immediately took up the practice of baptizing those who came to them, just as John had done (Jesus did not baptize, however, cf. John 4.1, 2). Baptism is a ritual symbolizing important spiritual truths. Which truths (v. 25)? Are rituals like this important? Explain. *Lord, I pray that we might all consider the rituals of our church more carefully, so that...*

3. Evidently, John continued his ministry, even though he knew who Jesus was and what his role was in relationship to Him. Was John right to do this? Do you suppose John's ministry changed at all after Jesus began His? Note the mention of John's imprisonment in verse 24. In what ways can we see the hand of God in this? *The Gospel is about Jesus, Lord, not about me, our church, or...*

4. We note that John's followers addressed him as "Rabbi," just as the first disciples had addressed Jesus (cf. Jn. 1.38). In Jewish religion of that day, many rabbis, or teachers, were acknowledged as such, and gathered loyal followers around them. Traditions of interpretation developed around some of the more gifted and respected leaders, but most of the rabbis were local in their ministry. John

had testified of Jesus (v. 26), and some of those who followed him turned to follow Jesus. What does this suggest about those who were appealing to John at this point? *Lord, keep me from being attached to human leaders! Let my loyalty always be...*

5. We will see how John handles this challenge, and how God Himself steps in to minimize the confusion about Jesus and His ministry. What would you suggest to church leaders as the best ways to keep leadership conflicts from arising in your church? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

### *Summary*

“Why, when the disciples of Jesus were baptizing, didn’t John stop baptizing? Why did he continue even until he was led to prison?... He would have made the disciples of Jesus seem the more revered if he had stopped when they began.... But he did so because he did not want to excite his own disciples to an even stronger rivalry and contention than there already was between the two. For even if he had proclaimed Christ ten thousand times and given him the chief place, making himself much more the inferior, he still would not have been able to persuade his disciples to run to Christ.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Throughout the course of His ministry, Jesus will face challenges to His authority. We’ve already seen this in John 2, and now here it is in a subtler form at the end of John 3. Jesus asserts authority in everything He does, and they who prefer to pick and choose their authorities – making *themselves* the final authority in everything – will naturally resist Him. Can we expect that we, too, will balk at Jesus’ authority from time to time? Explain.

### *Closing Prayer*

Why do the nations rage,  
And the people plot a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the Why do the nations rage,  
And the people plot a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,  
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces  
And cast away Their cords from us.”  
He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;  
The LORD shall hold them in derision.  
Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,  
And distress them in His deep displeasure:  
“Yet I have set My King  
On My holy hill of Zion.”

Psalm 2.1-6

**Psalm 2.1-6** ([\*Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!\*](#))

Why do the nations vainly rage, conspiring together from age to age?

*The Gospel of John: John 3.22-36*

Earth's kings and all of their counselors stand against the Lord and His Right Hand:

“Now let us cast His yoke below, His Kingdom authority overthrow!  
Throw off His Law, reject His Word; no more be governed by this Lord!”

The Lord in heaven laughs in wrath at all who embark on this cursèd path.  
His angry Word to them is plain: “Yet shall My King in Zion reign!”

## 2 It's All Good

*Read and meditate on John 3.27-30*

John's reply to his disciples, when they expressed their concern about Jesus' rising popularity, is a study in humility and faith. We can all learn much from John.

*<sup>27</sup>John replied, "What would you have me do? A man receives what comes to him from heaven, and nothing more. <sup>28</sup>The witness I have given, as you well know, is that I am not He, the Christ, but I was sent before Him. <sup>29</sup>He Who has the bride the bridegroom is; His friend rejoices greatly at His voice, and stands and hears Him. Thus my joy is full. <sup>30</sup>He must increase, and I must decrease, as I trust."*

- John 3.27-30

*Reflect*

1. John's first line of response to his disciples (v. 27) is to put this situation in a proper context – "under the heavens," as Solomon might say, rather than "under the sun." Why was this important? What does it reveal to us about John? Complete this prayer: *Too often, Lord, I'm living only "under the sun," and my discipleship falters. Help me to live "under the heavens" at all times, so that...*
2. Meditate on John's use of the verb, *receive*. What does this suggest about how he viewed his ministry? Did John feel as though he had *earned* his status as rabbi because of anything in him? How does one maintain the kind of view of his life and calling that John expresses in this verb? *I know, Lord, that every good and perfect gift comes from You, and is given for...*
3. John mildly reproaches his disciples in verse 28 for not having paid better attention to him. How could they have missed this message? Are we in danger of missing messages as well, because we're too attached to a person or ministry? Explain. *You are the Center, Lord; You are the Goal, You are...*
4. Meditate on Micah 4.1-8. In the light of this, explain John's comment in verse 29. How does this apply to your church, and your role in your church? *Help me always to rejoice, Lord, as I remember that...*
5. What does John's comment in verse 30 reveal about him? Compare this with Paul's teaching in Ephesians 4.17-24. How should John's comment and Paul's teaching guide your walk with and work for the Lord? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

"Do not be surprised that he seems to speak somewhat humbly of Christ, especially when you consider that it was not appropriate to tell the whole truth to minds prepossessed with such a passion as envy. He only tries at present to alarm them by showing them that they are making war against none other than God himself when they attack Christ.... It is as if he said it is no wonder

that Christ does such excellent works and that everyone comes to him when you consider that the one who does it all is God. Human efforts are easily seen through, are feeble and short-lived. These actions of Jesus are not like that. They are not therefore of human but of divine origin.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

John is not troubled by what some consider a threat to his leadership. He knows Whom he has believed and served, and he wants to make sure his followers do as well. John is full of grace and truth as he rebukes and corrects his followers. What can we learn from him about following Jesus?

*Closing Prayer*

The LORD said to my Lord,  
“Sit at My right hand,  
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”  
The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.  
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!  
Your people *shall be* volunteers  
In the day of Your power;  
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,  
You have the dew of Your youth.  
The LORD has sworn  
And will not relent,  
“You *are* a priest forever  
According to the order of Melchizedek.”  
The Lord *is* at Your right hand...

Psalm 110.1-5a

**Psalm 110.1-4** ([\*Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation\*](#))

“Sit by Me at My right hand,” the Lord says to my Lord,  
“Until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word.”  
From in His Church the Savior rules all His enemies;  
While those who know His favor go forth the Lord to please.

Filled with the Spirit’s power, in holy robes of love,  
From early morning’s hour they serve their Lord above.  
Christ reigns a priest forever, the King of Righteousness  
And King of Peace Who ever His chosen ones will bless.

### 3 Over All

*Read and meditate on John 3.31, 32.*

John rebukes his disciples so gently here that we might fail to see this comment for what it is. It's very easy for people to become so attached to their leaders that they lose sight of the larger context in which leadership is exercised. At such times, they need to be reminded and refocused, as John does here.

*<sup>31</sup>He Who from heaven comes is over all;  
he who is earthly, speaks of earth. But all  
are subject to the One Who comes from heaven.  
<sup>32</sup>What He has seen and heard, this He has given  
to us as testimony; and yet none  
receives His Word."*

- John 3.31, 32

*Reflect*

1. John compares himself with Jesus by the ideas of "above" and "earth." Is he demeaning himself and his work? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, I, too, am of the earth, but that doesn't mean that...*

2. Jesus came "from above," that is, "from heaven" (v. 31). Why does John speak of heaven as being *above*? In what sense is heaven *above* us? *How should I think about heaven and the unseen realities existing there? Lord, things in this realm should affect...?*

3. Because He came from heaven, Jesus is "above all." In what sense is Jesus "above all"? How does Jesus phrase this in Matthew 28.18? What was John saying to his disciples here? What is he saying to you? *Jesus, Lord of all, help me to remember today that You are "above all" in...*

4. John's statement about Jesus' witness sounds very much like what Jesus Himself said to Nicodemus (vv. 11, 12). In what sense had Jesus "seen and heard" the things about which He testified? How should we expect to *see and bear* these things? *Help me, Lord, to see and bear the things You want me to testify, as I...*

5. Nicodemus did not receive Jesus' testimony. Neither did these disciples of John. How do you understand John's statement, "no one receives His testimony"? Is John accurate here? Does he seem to be faltering in his faith? Or should we see this as a rebuke to those who have come to him ("none of you receives...")? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

"'He who comes from above,' he says, 'is born of the root that is from above, preserving in himself by nature the Father's natural goodness. Such a person will most assuredly possess an existence that surpasses everything. For, it would be impossible for the Son not to appear altogether to be the same kind of being as the one who begot him is conceived of. And this is only right. For how can the Son, who excels because he is of the same nature and is the Brightness and express Image of the

Father—how can he be inferior to his [Father] in glory? Or will not the property of the Father be dishonored in the Son, and do we not insult the Image of the Begotten, if we consider him to be inferior? But this I suppose will be clear to everyone. This is why it is also written that everyone should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father. Whoever is glorified with equal honor with God the Father, because he exists from him by nature, has to be conceived of as surpassing the essence of things originate. For this is what ‘above all means.’” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

John’s rebuke of his disciples is pointed but gentle. He reminds them of what he had testified to them, which message they seem to have missed, and chides them for not having believed. Even here John’s humility is evident, since he speaks indirectly to his disciples. How can you see John’s love for his disciples in this response?

*Closing Prayer*

I will declare Your name to My brethren;  
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.  
You who fear the LORD, praise Him!  
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,  
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!

Psalm 22.22, 23

**Psalm 22.23, 28** ([\*Darvall: Rejoice, the Lord is King\*](#))

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!  
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!  
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;  
All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.  
The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

## 4 Proving God

*Read and meditate on John 3.33.*

We want to linger over John's comment here, because it is fraught with significance for us as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>33</sup>*"They prove God true, each one who has received His testimony."*

- John 3.33

*Reflect*

1. First, we note that John acknowledges that at least some ("He" NKJV, "They" in our verse translation) have received Jesus' testimony. If John were the *only one* to have done so, at least he did. What did it mean for John to have received the testimony of Jesus? Complete this prayer: *Lord, today I expect people to know that I have received Your testimony by...*

2. Evidently, the testimony of our Lord Jesus was testimony about God, for the result of receiving His testimony is to certify that God is true. In what sense is God true? True about what? For how much of life and the world? How should God being true affect our approach to getting along in this world? *You are true, O Lord, and I want to...*

3. John says that he who receives Jesus' testimony *certifies* that God is true. The Greek verb here means something like "sets a seal" or even "proves." How did John the Baptist *certify* that God is true? In what ways did his life bear the *stamp* of God's truth? *Lord, You are at work within me to form me into Your own image (2 Cor. 3.18). Today, I need You to...*

4. What is involved in someone receiving Jesus' testimony today? That is, how might someone learn the things Jesus has seen and heard, and *receive* and *certify* them? What is your role in this process? *What I have seen and heard from You, Lord, let me...*

5. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said they were the credentials that proved his ministry (2 Corinthians 3). How did they do that? What was being *stamped* on them, and how did that *certify* Paul's ministry and testimony? What does it mean to be *stamped* with the image of Jesus Christ, and how does this come about in our lives? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

"There was no other possible way of showing the impiety of those who do not believe except by making known the glorious achievement of the believers. Evil is a lot easier to see when it is contrasted with good. When you know there is something better out there, it only puts what is worse in starker contrast. If anyone then, John says, has assented to the words of the one who comes from above, he has sealed and confirmed by his understanding that truth is ever near and dear to the divine nature. The opposite is just as obvious because anyone who throws away the faith will most certainly testify, against himself, that God is not true." *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

God intends to establish Himself as true, and to do this through those who receive the testimony of Jesus. What are the implications of this for our lives as disciples in the world – in every arena and aspect of life in the world?

*Closing Prayer*

The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness,  
The world and those who dwell therein.  
For He has founded it upon the seas,  
And established it upon the waters.  
Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?  
Or who may stand in His holy place?  
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,  
Nor sworn deceitfully.  
He shall receive blessing from the LORD,  
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.  
This *is* Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,  
Who seek Your face.  
Selah  
Lift up your heads, O you gates!  
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!  
And the King of glory shall come in.

Psalm 24.1-7

**Psalm 24.1-6** (*Foundation: How Firm a Foundation*)

The earth is the Lord's, as is all it contains;  
The world and its peoples He daily sustains.  
He founded it fast on the seas long ago,  
And bid gentle rivers throughout it to flow.

Oh, who may ascend to the Lord's holy place?  
And who may appear to His glorious face?  
All they who are clean in their hearts and their hands  
And true in their souls with the Savior shall stand.

A blessing all they from the Lord shall receive  
Who seek Him and on His salvation believe.  
For these are His people, the children of grace,  
Who earnestly, eagerly seek for His face.

## 5 Spirit without Measure

*Read and meditate on John 3.34, 35.*

John considered the ministry of Jesus from a Trinitarian perspective. God the Father loves His Son, so He gives Him the Spirit without measure to accomplish His work. And His work is over “all things.” This is deep.

<sup>34</sup>“For  
the One Whom God has sent proclaims His Word,  
for God His Spirit parcels without measure.  
<sup>35</sup>The Father loves the Son, and in His pleasure,  
bestows all things into His hand.”

- John 3.34, 35

*Reflect*

1. John connects Jesus’ being sent by God with speaking the words of God and the Holy Spirit in His fullness. How would you put that in your own words? Complete this prayer: *I want to know the filling of Your Spirit, Lord, for when I do, I...*
2. Let’s explore that phrase, “does not give the Spirit by measure.” In what sense is this true of Jesus? Is this also true of those who receive His words and believe in Him? How do we reconcile this giving the Spirit without measure to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12.7-11? *Lord, let the full measure of Your Spirit manifest through me today as...*
3. John says, rather matter-of-factly, “The Father loves the Son...” (v. 35). How was it evident to John that this is so? How was it evident to the Son of God? Can we learn anything about love from John’s testimony? *Lord, I know You love me, so I’m prepared...*
4. Meditate on Hebrews 1.3 and Colossians 1.16, 17. In what sense has God the Father “given all things” into Jesus’ hand? For what purpose (cf. 2 Cor. 5.17-21)? *Help me, Lord, in the “all things” of my life, to live...*
5. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 3.21-23 and Hebrews 2.5-8. How do we fit into the “all things” work of our Lord Jesus Christ? Can we expect to fulfill this aspect of our calling apart from hearing Him and receiving His words? Explain. Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

*Summary*

“As the fount of the Spirit, [Christ] imparts him. He is speaking of the working of the Spirit, which people receive in some measure. For the Son himself has the full working of the Spirit in its entirety. Truly, the Son has the entire Spirit in essence and not in some measure, as a created being might have. Therefore, he himself imparts the Spirit, and by their petitions the saints make Christ supply the Spirit.” *Ammonius of Alexandria (late 5<sup>th</sup>-early 6<sup>th</sup> century AD)*

John introduces here the work of the Spirit in the work of Christ. This will become an increasingly

important focus in John's unfolding story, as well as in the ongoing work of Christ following His ascension. How would you put the following together into a single sentence: Jesus, the words of the Father, the Spirit, all things, those who receive His testimony?

*Closing Prayer*

You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;  
And You renew the face of the earth.  
May the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
May the LORD rejoice in His works.  
He looks on the earth, and it trembles;  
He touches the hills, and they smoke.  
I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.  
May my meditation be sweet to Him;  
I will be glad in the LORD.

Psalm 104.30-34

**Psalm 104.24-35** (*Creation: Exalt the Lord, His Praise Proclaim*)

How many are Your works, O Lord, which You have created by Your Word!  
The earth and sea with creatures teem – they look to You to care and feed.  
You give to them, they gather all; You hide Your face they fail and fall.  
You take their breath, they gasp and die; You send Your Spirit, they revive.

Lord, let Your glory long endure; rejoice! His works are ever sure!  
He looks on earth, it quails and quakes, as we our songs and praises make.  
Lord, let our meditation rise and bring great pleasure in Your eyes.  
Consumed shall sinners ever be – O, bless and praise the Lord with me!

## 6 Life, or Not

*Read and meditate on John 3.36.*

The issue, where receiving the words of Jesus is concerned, is life, or not. Jesus, Peter will later insist, has the words of life. The Spirit and Word of Jesus give life, as we shall see. All who believe in Jesus will never die, but live forever, as Jesus will explain before raising Lazarus. Here in John 3, the apostle has put down the defining marker of Jesus' work: Life! Everlasting life!

<sup>36</sup> *“And all who come to Him, and on His mercy call, believing in Him, shall not come to strife, but have the gift of everlasting life. And they shall not see life, but know the grim abiding wrath of God, who do not Him believe.”*

- John 3.19-21

*Reflect*

1. How would you explain the idea of “everlasting life” to an unbelieving friend? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, I thank You that I have everlasting life, because...*
2. Based on what we've seen in this chapter, how is John using the verb *believe* here? What does it mean to *believe* in Jesus? How might you be able to tell if someone *believes* in Jesus? *Lord, I believe in You! Help me...*
3. Paul says that those who have not received Jesus are still dead in their trespasses and sins. They're walking around, looking for all the world like they're alive, but they're dead (Eph. 2.1-3). Is he right? Are lost people dead? In what sense? How should this affect us, as we think about the lost people in our lives? *Lord, I live and work and have my everyday life among dead people! Help me to live so that...*
4. John is rehearsing the Good News of everlasting life, to all who hear the Son of God and believe in Him. But he conveys that Good News against the backdrop of impending judgment and wrath. Should we include the coming judgment of God when we share the Gospel? *Lord, when I'm talking to others about You, let me share the whole Gospel, including...*
5. Believing in Jesus is only an “option” when we realize the alternative is not merely believing in something else, but placing oneself under the wrath and coming judgment of God. God's wrath is even now being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of those who suppress the knowledge of God and prefer idols to Him (Rom. 1.18-32). The Gospel brings freedom from wrath and the reality, hope, and joy of everlasting life. Who in your Personal Mission Field needs to hear the Gospel from you? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.” Why? Because he has done the work of God, seeing

that this is the work of God that you should believe in the one whom he has sent. 'But whoever does not believe in the Son will not have life, but the wrath of God remains on him'; not 'will come upon him' but 'remains on him.' He is abandoned, not healed." *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

John reminds us that the Good News is good precisely because the bad news is so bad. People must be warned of the bad news so that they can understand the Good News for what it is. How would you incorporate the bad news with the Good in your presentation of the Gospel?

*Closing Prayer*

Fill their faces with shame,  
That they may seek Your name, O LORD.  
Let them be confounded and dismayed forever;  
Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,  
That they may know that You, whose name alone *is* the LORD,  
*Are* the Most High over all the earth.

Psalm 83.16-18

**Psalm 83.16-18** ([\*St. Chrysostom: We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought\*](#))

Fill with dishonor every face that they may seek Your Name, O Lord.  
Bring them to shame, dismay, and disgrace, and let them perish under Your Word,  
That they may learn Your infinite worth, O God Most High of all the earth!

## 7 John's Final Witness

*Read and meditate on John 3.22-36.*

John the Baptist is a study in discipleship. His boldness, courage, honesty, faithfulness, humility, and love for God and men teaches us all how we must take up the work of following Jesus and making Him known.

<sup>22</sup>Now some time after this came Jesus to the land of Judah, His disciples being with Him. They remained there, and together baptized all who came to them. <sup>23</sup>Now John was also baptizing in Aenon, near Salim, because there being much water there, and people came and were baptized by him. <sup>24</sup>(And this occurred before John was imprisoned.) <sup>25</sup>Then an argument arose, involving John's disciples and some Jews, concerning baptism. <sup>26</sup>They came to John and said, "The Man, the very same One Who beyond the Jordan was with you – concerning Whom you testified – He, too, is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" <sup>27</sup>John replied, "What would you have me do? A man receives what comes to him from heaven, and nothing more. <sup>28</sup>The witness I have given, as you well know, is that I am not He, the Christ, but I was sent before Him. <sup>29</sup>He Who has the bride the bridegroom is; His friend rejoices greatly at His voice, and stands and hears Him. Thus my joy is full. <sup>30</sup>He must increase, and I must decrease, as I trust. <sup>31</sup>He Who from heaven comes is over all; he who is earthly, speaks of earth. But all are subject to the One Who comes from heaven. <sup>32</sup>What He has seen and heard, this He has given to us as testimony; and yet none receives His Word. <sup>33</sup>They prove God true, each one who has received His testimony. <sup>34</sup>For the One Whom God has sent proclaims His Word, for God His Spirit parcels without measure. <sup>35</sup>The Father loves the Son, and in His pleasure, bestows all things into His hand. <sup>36</sup>And all who come to Him, and on His mercy call, believing in Him, shall not come to strife, but have the gift of everlasting life. And they shall not see life, but know the grim abiding wrath of God, who do not Him

*believe.”*

- John 3.22-36

*Reflect*

1. John the Baptist bows out of the Gospel story. He will shortly be arrested and detained, and will ultimately die a martyr's death for his faith. In what ways does John speak to you about what it means to follow Jesus? Complete this prayer: *Thank You, Lord, for the witness of John the Baptist, from whom I've learned...*

2. John's witness reminds us that in this world there are only two kinds of people. How would you define these? *Lord, I know that in my life are many people who...*

3. John's humility and grace stand out in this situation. Where other recognized leaders might have tried to shore up their position, lock in their followers, and perhaps cast aspersions on those who were challenging their position, John did nothing of the sort. His focus and desire were not on himself, but elsewhere. What can church leaders learn from John? *I pray for the leaders of our church, Lord, that...*

4. John was cast into prison because he exposed the sin of a pagan king in the light of the Law of God (cf. Matt. 14.1-12). How does the Law of God expose sin? Should some reference to the Law be part of our witness for Christ? Explain. *Lord, let me say with the psalmist, "O how I love Your Law!", because...*

5. John said that Jesus must increase but he must decrease. Apply that to your own walk with and work for the Lord. What should that look like in your life? In your relationships, roles, and responsibilities? What plan are you following for that to come about? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“But we must not think that even a right belief in Father, Son and Holy Spirit is all there is to salvation ... for our [faith] also has need of a good life and conversation. Knowing then that the greater part are not moved so much by the promise of good, as by the threat of punishment, he concludes, ‘But he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.’ ... And he does not say ‘in him’ but ‘on him,’ meaning that the wrath will never depart from him. And for the same reason he says, ‘shall not see life,’ that is, to show that he did not mean only a temporal death!” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

John's life and witness in some ways outlines the life and witness of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as our own life and witness as His followers. Explain.

*Closing Prayer*

The Lord *is* at Your right hand;  
He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.  
He shall judge among the nations,  
He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies,  
He shall execute the heads of many countries.

He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;  
Therefore He shall lift up the head.

Psalm 110.5-7

**Psalm 110.5-7** (*[Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation](#)*)

The Lord at Your right hand, Lord, in wrath shall shatter kings,  
When judgment by His strong Word He to the nations brings.  
Then, all His foes defeated, He takes His hard-won rest,  
In glorious triumph seated with us, redeemed and blessed!

*The Gospel of John: John 3.22-36*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. What are the most important lessons about discipleship we can learn from John the Baptist?
2. How would you summarize John's preaching of the Good News? What did it consist of?
3. How can Christians help one another to live more like John, so that Jesus increases in us – individually and as a community – and we decrease? What would that look like in your church?
4. The Gospel is both Good News and bad news. Explain.
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 3.22-36? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*Items for prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.