

# John 3:22-36

So many BAPTISMS... so little time. Back in Chapter 1, we read how John baptized in the Jordan River. We do not learn in the Gospel of John what the Baptism of John was for or what it signified. In Matthew, we learn that it was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in preparation for the coming Kingdom (or Reign) of God, identified with Jesus of Nazareth. We also read in Matthew 28 and Acts 2 that the Christian Church practiced a baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And we read in Acts 2, Galatians 3, Romans 6, Titus 3, and 1 Peter 3 what this Baptism was for, what it did, and what it signified. These baptisms are different; the only thing they had in common was the use of water. Now, in John 3, we come across ANOTHER Baptism. What is strange is that we never learn how this baptism was done, or for what purpose it was done. In other words, we do not know why someone would have been baptized with the baptism Jesus and his disciples are doing in John 3. There is nothing in the text to even clue us in to what it could mean. It was, and will remain a mystery.

It does not bother John that people are flocking to Jesus instead of to him. We see in this passage a “changing of the guard.” Jesus is doing what John is doing (baptizing) and his ministry is growing while the ministry of John is waning.

“He must become greater, I must become less.” About this statement of John, Morris writes in his commentary: “It is not particularly easy in this world to gather followers about one for a serious purpose. But when they have been gathered it is infinitely harder to detach them and firmly insist that they go after another.”

It would appear that John the Baptist is speaking the words of verses 31-36. However, this may be one of those times when it is hard to tell when a person stops speaking and the author John begins adding his commentary. (We have already looked at how verses like John 3:16 may or may not have been spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself and may instead have been the Apostles' commentary.) In this passage, phrases like “...but no one accepts his testimony...” (v.32) could hardly have been spoken by the Baptist about Jesus, since everyone is gathering around him. Instead, they could have been spoken about the Baptist's testimony concerning Christ. If this was the case, we would be led to understand that the people flocking to Jesus were doing it for reasons other than those given by the Baptist. For the testimony of the Baptist concerning Jesus, see 1:19-23.

3:33 points to the importance of accepting the message (or testimony) of John the Baptist. What was his testimony?

When we listen to the words of Jesus, we are listening to God speak. God decided to communicate his truth through human language. How does God still communicate to people through human language?

One of the themes of the Gospel of John is the authority of Jesus. (Which we will see in later chapters.) John says that the Father has placed all things in the Son's hands. (Yes, this is where we get the children's song ☺) Jesus still has all things placed in his hands by the Father and has authority over them. How can this fact be both frightening and comforting?

Notice the similarities between 3:16-18 and 3:36. Why does God's wrath remain on the one who rejects the Son? (See 3:33-34.)

Notice in 3:36 that eternal life is the present-possession of the one who believes in the Son. How do we have eternal life now? How will our eternal life more fully manifest itself in the future?

Notice also in 3:36 that the one who rejects the Son will not see life. This is a future (not a present) reality. How will someone who rejects the Son not see life in the future? What can we do to prevent this from happening?