

**Introduction:**

- I. Scene Ends and a New One Begins.
  - A. From the beginning of Ch. 3, we had Jesus in a conversation with Nicodemus (3:2) and Jesus spoke to Nicodemus through v. 21.
  - B. While the scene with Nicodemus has ended, there is theological nuance occurring.
    - 1. That is, while the immediate context has changed (i.e., Jesus is not speaking to Nicodemus now in v. 22), there is a theological connection in what we read in John the Baptist and his conversation with some of his followers.
    - 2. This means, also, that we must see from the outset that it is John the Baptist speaking directly in the text and is answering a specific issue raised in vv. 25-26
      - a) This ^ is the context by which the proceeding verses come to us

**Exegesis of John 3:22-35:**

- I. John the Baptist and His Disciples:
  - A. What is Jesus doing?
    - 1. It would be safe to assume (perhaps) that now we are beyond the night and into the day time (3:2, Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night) the following hours after the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus.
    - 2. Jesus takes His disciples into Judea and begins to baptize (vv. 22-23)
      - a) The focus here is not so much on the quality of Jesus' baptisms (that is, baptizing in the Spirit) but the exaltation of Jesus by John the Baptist.
      - b) Though, one point is interesting to notice:
        - (1) 4:2 gives us insight on 3:22.
          - (a) that is, it was Jesus' disciples that was doing the baptisms.
          - (b) Jesus was overseeing them.
  - B. John and His Disciples:
    - 1. Short Note:
      - a) Again we are seeing theological themes rather than chronological narratives (v. 24).
        - (1) the author, John the Apostle, is clueing us into the fact that this took place before John was beheaded.
        - (2) Interestingly, John's gospel does not record The Baptists' beheading.
          - (a) Only Matthew (14:1-12), Mark (6:14-29), and Luke (9:7-9) do.

***(b) This is why it is safe to say that the focus is theological and has connections to the conversation with Jesus and Nicodemus.***

2. Competition? Maybe More?

a) Some Thoughts:

- (1) Some of the controversy that builds up the need for a conversation seems to be the notice that people are going to Jesus and following Him rather than John the Baptist (v. 25)
- (2) While the conversation is centered around purification (which, we will get to later on), there seems to be a misunderstanding going on, but not for John the Baptist.

b) The “More” (v. 26)

- (1) The disciples of John the Baptist are noticing something that seems to be natural but not clear:
  - (a) John the Baptist bore witness about Jesus (1:6) and declared who Jesus is and was to be (1:29, 36).
  - (b) Notice all people are going to Jesus.
  - (c) There is a sense of significance missing or a role from John’s disciples, it seems.
  - (d) They follow John who bore witness about Jesus and now all people are going to Jesus. What now?

3. John’s Response:

a) “Remember, I am not the Christ” (vv. 27-29)

- (1) What is meant by John’s comments in v. 27?
  - (a) This response seems rather vague from the Baptist.
    - i) that is, exactly how does this answer the thought raised from his followers?
  - (b) What John is doing, though, is profound.
  - (c) The word “man” is used intentionally here, as it was in 1:6, when we first see John the Baptist in this gospel.
  - (d) In other words, John is seeing this situation raised by his disciples not only from his role but from what is now shifting in terms of focus and person (namely, to Jesus, not John).
- (2) I am not the Christ!
  - (a) John repeats his words he made to the Jewish Priests and Levites (1:19-27).

- (b) Though, this is obvious to his disciples; clearly, John is not Jesus—but that’s the point!
- (3) The Focus Shift:
  - (a) John utilizes the analogy of the wedding (probably harkening back to 2:1-12).
  - (b) Just as the bridegroom is center stage, enjoying His bride, so is Jesus.
  - (c) John is not to have the center stage, as it were and he understands that.
  - (d) The Baptist’ role was to witness the coming of the Savior, and he has done that. Now, comes his famous proclamation:
- b) “My Role is Finished: He Must Increase” (v. 30)
  - (1) First,
    - (a) This verse contains the last words from John the Baptist in John’s gospel—and they are profound.
  - (2) What is meant by the Baptist’s words?
    - (a) The key concept is in the word “must.”
      - i) Must has shown up regarding someone being born again (3:3, 7) and Jesus being lifted up (3:14).
      - ii) John must, by divine necessity, step back because it is only Jesus who provides the true baptism that people need to follow (1:19-34).

## II. John the Apostles’ Thoughts (vv. 31-35)

### A. The Necessary and Explicit Implications:

1. Jesus’ Superiority (v. 31)
  - a) Jesus is the Word and John is the man.
  - b) Jesus is naturally greater in all ways, including what He offers (the Spirit)
2. Theological Balance (vv. 32-33)
  - a) Humanity, by himself, cannot receive the truth of God nor declare Him as truth (1:14b).
  - b) But, God does give Himself to His children (1:12-13) and they declare, rightly, that He is the truth and the life giver.
3. Trinitarian Salvation and a Fair Warning (v.34-36):
  - a) Jesus is the Words of God (v. 34a)
    - (1) Jesus is not only the Word (the revealer of God) but in His humanity and His Deity, is the very Words of God to humanity.
    - (2) That is, Jesus’ authority, teaching, and actions are all as if they are from God the Father because He is equal with the Father in all ways (1:1).

b) Jesus and the Spirit (v. 34b):

- (1) What may seem immediately the case is not the case when scripture says, “for He gives the Spirit without measure.”
  - (a) One commentator (which I agree) suggests this reading, “For God gives to *Him* the Spirit without measure.”
  - (b) God is the implied subject but it is to Jesus that the direct object (the Spirit) is being given, rather than Jesus giving the Spirit.
    - i) Jesus WILL give the Spirit after His death and glorification (7:37-39)

c) Jesus and the Father (v. 35):

- (1) Distinctions must be made here because such a verse can seem odd in light of John 1:1.
  - (a) How is it that Jesus is receiving something from the Father that was not already His since He is equal with the Father?
  - (b) Why does it seem that Jesus is less superior in this verse?
- (2) What is being communicated here has to do with the humanity of Jesus, rather than His Deity.
  - (a) That is, verse 36 cues us in to the “all” of v. 35: whoever believes...”
  - (b) This is the all that Jesus is given.
    - i) John 6:39, “And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.” (ESV)
    - ii) John 6:39, “This is the will of Him who sent me: that I should lose none of those He has given Me but should raise them up on the last day.”
    - iii) The significance of “all” that John’s disciples notice in v. 26 is incredible in light of v. 35!

d) Eternal Consequences (v. 36)

- (1) Piecing it all together:
  - (a) In essence, since the Son reveals the Father (1:1), is the one who will be raised up in death (3:14-15), will send the Spirit to apply His atonement (Jesus talking to Nicodemus 3:1-15, and in lieu of 7:37-39), and thus fulfilling the plan of God from all eternity (seen fleshed out in Ephesians 1:1-14).
- (2) John as the truth, Nicodemus heard Jesus talk about it, but we now read the plan of God for the salvation of those who believe.