



The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

Part 8

John 3:22-36

Introduction:

- As we continue our course through the Gospel of John. It is important to remember John's purpose for writing his Gospel.
 - ❖ John 20:31--*but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
- Thus when we read in John's Gospel about the ministry of John the baptist, the calling of the disciples, the wedding at Cana, the cleansing of the temple, and the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus we are not merely recording historical facts. Each one of these episodes is intended to help us know Jesus and live.

1. The prologue (John 1:1-18)

- In this episode, Jesus is revealed to be the almighty, eternal, Lord of creation, and Word of God. Even more spectacular is the reality that the Word of God is in fact God himself.

2. The ministry of John the Baptist (John 1:19-36)

- In this episode, Jesus is proclaimed to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

3. The calling of the disciples (John 1:35-51)

- In this episode, Jesus references Jacob's ladder. This ladder shows that there is indeed a chasm between God and man. In Jacob's dream the Lord was at the top of the ladder. In John 1 the Lord has descended so that he might restore us to God.

4. The wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12)


- In this episode, we see that the Old Covenant has run its course and Jesus has come to make a new covenant, a covenant in his blood. This new covenant is powerful to save, and abounding to many.

5. The cleansing of the temple (John 2:13-25)

- In this episode, we see that Jesus has become for us the place where we meet with God. The temple of his body would be destroyed but in three days he would raise it up so that all who come to him would be reconciled to God.

6. The conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)

- In this episode, Jesus reveals to us that he is like the serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness in that anyone who looks to him or believes in him will receive eternal life.

 In today's episode, we encounter John the Baptist for the second time. When we first encountered John the Baptist in chapter 1 we focused on who John the Baptist was what his ministry was all about. Today, in our second encounter with John the Baptist, we see him behave with tremendous humility and assurance. Then, we will unpack the truths about Jesus that caused such humility and assurance.

I. What is happening on the surface?

1. Jesus and his disciples had a baptism ministry (John 3:22-24)



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- ❖ John 3:22-24--*After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. 23 John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized 24 (for John had not yet been put in prison).*

2. John's disciples are concerned

- ❖ John 3:25--*Now a discussion arose between some of John 's disciples and a Jew over purification.*
 - There was a debate between John's disciples and a certain Jewish person. The fact that it was over purification likely means that the debate was similar to the
- ❖ John 3:26--*And they came to John and said to him, Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness — look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.*
 - John's disciples were distressed and resentful that after all the kind words that their rabbi had said about Jesus, Jesus is not returning the favor. Instead he is swooping in and snatching up all their people.

3. John's response

John reminds his disciples who is really in control

- ❖ John 3:27--*John answered, A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven*
 - John the Baptist is comforting his disciples with truth. He is pointing out to them that God is utterly sovereign over everything. Nothing slips through God's fingers! God is sovereign over all circumstances pleasant and unpleasant. The scriptures have testified that...
 - ❖ Proverbs 16:33--*The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.*
 - ❖ Isaiah 45:7--*I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things.*
 - ❖ Deuteronomy 32:39--*See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.*
 - Thus, the circumstances that they are so very troubled by have been ordained by the God they serve. What a point of application! How many times do we ourselves fret over circumstances that God himself has ordained?
 - John's faith isn't a blind faith. John's confidence comes from the fact that he knows how this particular story is supposed to end. It ends with the bridegroom redeeming his bride (John 3:29)! It ends with the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world (John 1:29-34)!
 - This confidence that John the Baptist has should be ours as well. As we experience difficult circumstances, suffering, loss, etc. we can have tremendous confidence because we who are in Christ know how our story ends.
 - ❖ Romans 8:28-29--*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

John had an honest assessment of himself



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- ❖ John 3:28--*You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.*
 - It would have been very easy for John the Baptist to think of himself more highly than he ought to have. His ministry was very well known and people came from all around to be baptized by him. His ministry was so significant that he sometimes had to clarify for people that he wasn't actually the Christ (John 1:19-20).

John wasn't just "ok" with what was happening, he was thrilled!

- ❖ John 3:29-30--*The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.*
 - What we are seeing here is that John is not just "ok" with people abandoning him for Jesus, he is excited about it. He demands that this not only should happen, it simply **MUST** happen. Christ **MUST** increase and receive more and more laud and honor! John the Baptist **MUST** decrease because staying with him means that they will not be giving honor and glory to the one who really deserves it.
- How is it that John the Baptist is able to respond this way? What truth is John the baptist clinging to that motivates such humility and integrity? The answer to these questions is found in what John the Baptist says about Jesus.

II. What does John the Baptist say about Jesus?

1. Jesus is the bridegroom who has come for his bride

- ❖ John 3:29-30--*The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.*
 -  John the Baptist isn't just making this stuff up. The picture of God being the husband to his people comes from OT passages like...
 - ❖ Hosea 2:16--*16 And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me My Husband, and no longer will you call me My Baal.*
 - ❖ Hosea 2:19-20--*And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. 20 I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.*
 -  Because John the Baptist knows that Christ is the bridegroom who has come for his bride, he delights in his role as the "best man."
 - It's all about perspective. John's followers only saw that they were losing people. Their eyes were fixed on themselves, their own success, their own pride, their own means of justifying their existence. John the Baptist saw the fulfillment of every OT promise. The one who would crush the serpents head (Genesis 3:15) had come! The one who would truly make Israel a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:3) had come! The one who would make atonement for us, free us from the slavery of sin, and grant us everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24) had come. The Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace himself (Isaiah 9:6) had come. The everlasting kingdom promised to David (2 Samuel 7:16) was being revealed in the everlasting Lord of the universe, Jesus Christ.



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2. Jesus is not a mere man, he is from heaven

- ❖ John 3:31-32--*He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.*
 - This statement is not a negation of his authentic humanity. It is an affirmation of his divinity. Jesus is every bit as human as you or I. However, unlike like you and I, Jesus has another nature as well. He is God almighty!
 - ❖ John 1:1-5--*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*
 - Jesus is God, he is eternal, through him everything without exception was made and nothing was made without Him making it, he is life.

3. Jesus is one with the Father

- ❖ John 3:33-35--*Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. 34 For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.*
 - “Jesus so completely says and does all that God says and does, and only what God says and does, that to believe Jesus is to believe God.¹”
 - Likewise, God gives all things to Christ. Unlike the prophets of old who received only a measure of the Spirit Christ receives the Spirit without measure from the Father. John the Baptist himself witnessed this...
 - ❖ John 1:32--*I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.*

4. To believe in Jesus is to have eternal life, to reject Jesus is to remain under God’s wrath

- ❖ John 3:36--*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*
 - CHRIST ALONE!!! Something important to notice is the exclusivity of this claim. John the Baptist preaches that Jesus is the one and only way to eternal life. He offers no alternative methods for getting out from under God’s furious wrath. When John the Baptist sees Jesus he doesn’t see **a** way to eternal life, he sees the **only** way to eternal life. People must leave him for Jesus because that is the only way they will live. There is a tremendous sense of urgency in this message.

Closing Application:

- What John the Baptist knew about Jesus caused him to be willing to loose everything for Christ’s sake. It caused him to be willing to die for Christ’s sake. It caused him to be able to endure all circumstances. His followers were flocking to Jesus and yet he was thrilled about this because of what he knew about Jesus.

¹ D.A. Carson, John: Pillar New testament Commentary



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- **Question:** How does what we know about Jesus affect us? Does it radically change us the way it did John the Baptist? Are we confident in all circumstances because we know that he is absolutely sovereign? Are we bold to preach the gospel because we know he can and will save? Do we share John the Baptist's urgency in pointing people away from us and to Jesus?