

Who is the Greatest

John 3:22-36

22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. 23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. 24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

25 Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified — behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease. 31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33 He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. 34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. 35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. 36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." NKJV

- I. John & Jesus had separate but similar ministries.
 - A. They both preached repentance.
 - B. They both preached the coming kingdom.
 - C. They both baptized their followers.

- II. Jesus takes up a ministry in Judea where John has continued to minister since his beginning.
 - A. Jesus went back and forth between Judea and Galilee.
 - B. This is before John is put into prison for criticizing the king.
 - C. John is ministering at a spring, where there was much waters or many pools of water because water is needed for scriptural baptism.

- III. The Jews contended with John about his baptism, “purifying”

- A. The Jews use this opportunity to cut him down by his previous approval of Jesus.
 - 1. One of the devices of Satan has always been to get God's people to fight among themselves over personalities and such like.
 - 2. So they tell him that Jesus is doing more ministry than he was.
 - 3. In their mind the disciple had out paced the master.
 - 4. But John knew that was not the case at all.
- B. John's answer.
 - 1. I told you that I am not the Christ.
 - 2. I was simply sent before Him to point others to Him.
 - 3. A man can receive nothing really unless it is given from above.
 - 4. He must increase but I must continue to fade into the back ground.
- C. John is only the friend of the Bridegroom.
 - 1. Throughout the New Testament there is the theme that each church is the bride of Christ.
 - 2. 2Co 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.
 - 3. Eph 5:25-33 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. NKJV
 - 4. John was not a part of the New Testament church and therefore not a part of the bride of Christ.
 - 5. He was content with that.
 - 6. In the Old Testament Israel is spoken of as the wife of God but in the New Testament the church is spoken of as the bride of Jesus Christ.
- D. John's whole purpose was to point to and to glorify Jesus Christ.

1. He alone is worthy of all honor and glory.
2. We are not to be praised but all praise to go to Him.
3. John could never be upset that Jesus was surpassing him in the number of disciples he was gaining.

IV. Jesus is above all

- A. He came from above, from heaven and heavenly things are of much greater magnitude than things on earth.
- B. The problem, John says is not that many people are following Jesus but that not everyone is following him. V-32
- C. Unlike John or any mere man Jesus did not have a measurable bestowment of the Spirit given to Him. V-34
- D. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. V-35
- E. You see it is all about Jesus.
- F. It is not about you and me, or some other Christian leader.
- G. We are all from beneath, He alone is from above.
- H. What is important is that Jesus increase and we do not get the credit for it.

V. It is either faith in Jesus or it is the wrath of God

- A. 36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
- B. Everyone has but one choice to make, Jesus, yes or no.
- C. Without Jesus all you have is the wrath of God upon you.
- D. So then the question is as always what is your relationship with Jesus.
 1. It is not about your church membership.
 2. It is not about your baptism.
 3. It is not about your good deeds.
 4. It is about Jesus and whether you know him or not.
 5. Remember, faith is having confidence in someone you know and are familiar enough with to have confidence with.