“He Must Increase!”

John 3:22-36
8-11-2024

Introduction: vv.22-27

- **Because of who Jesus is, “He Must Increase, but I must decrease” (v.30)**

See how exalted Jesus is by listening to John the Baptist’s Testimony about Him:

John testified…

I. He is the Messiah, I am His forerunner (v.28)

II. He is the Groom, I am His “best man” (v.29)

III. He is from Heaven, I am of this world (v.31)

IV. He is precisely the Voice of God (v.32-34a)

V. He is fully endowed with God’s Spirit (v.34b)

VI. He is the ultimate authority over everything (v.35)

VII. He is the exclusive source of eternal life (v.36)

Conclusion:

“He Must Increase!”

John 3:22-36
8-11-2024

Introduction: vv.22-27

- **Because of who Jesus is, “He Must Increase, but I must decrease” (v.30)**

See how exalted Jesus is by listening to John the Baptist’s Testimony about Him:

John testified…

I. He is the _____, I am His _____ (v.28)

II. He is the _____, I am His “_____” (v.29)

III. He is from _____, I am of this _____ (v.31)

IV. He is precisely the _____ (v.32-34a)

V. He is fully endowed with _____ (v.34b)

VI. He is the _____ over everything (v.35)

VII. He is the exclusive source of eternal life (v.36)

Conclusion:

“He Must Increase!”

John 3:22-36
8-11-2024

Introduction: vv.22-27

v. 22
He who had the power to baptize believers into the Holy Spirit and unbelievers into the fires of *Gehenna* (Mt. 3:11-12) was here baptizing into water those who repented of sin. Although in actuality it was his disciples who did most of the baptizing, as He had delegated this job to them (Jn. 4:2).

v. 23
“Aenon” – means “springs” (Carson, p. 209). A place endowed with plenty of water

“There was much water there” – This phrase supports the fact that the mode of baptism was immersion and not sprinkling. You don’t need much water to sprinkle, but you do for immersion. Bible baptism is by immersion, for believers (those who profess faith), and it identifies you as a follower of Christ.

The point of John’s mention of the towns where John the Baptist and Jesus were baptizing was to show that Jesus had moved into John’s territory.

The Apostle John is making a comparison and contrast between Jesus and John the Baptist. Both were baptizing and making disciples, but who was greater? As John the Baptist will testify, Jesus is infinitely greater.

v. 25
“Purifying” – not only does baptism identify the person being baptized with Christ, but it also symbolizes a purity, cleansing, or newness of life that comes from repentance and faith in Christ.

Note: the connection between baptism and purification is implied in context (v. 26).

“Purifying (v. 25) . . . **baptizeth”** (v. 26)

It is important to note that baptism does not produce purity of soul, but it does symbolize the purity of soul that occurs via repentance and faith.

v. 26
“Without realizing it, John’s disciples were putting him into a situation of competing against the Lord Jesus! ‘All men come to Him!’ (v. 26) sounds like a wail of despair. It is interesting to note that four of the greatest men in the Bible faced this problem of comparison and competition: Moses (Num. 1:26-30), John the Baptist (Jn. 3:26-30), Jesus (Lk. 9:46-50), and Paul (Phil. 1:15-18). A leader often suffers more from his zealous disciples than from his critics!” (Wiersbe, p. 297).

Would John the Baptist be concerned (troubled) that so many were following Jesus? No, to the contrary, he will now testify that all should come to Jesus because He is infinitely greater than John.

v. 27
John implies that Christ's authority is from Heaven. Anything, of any true spiritual and eternal significance must come from God out of Heaven. Unless it is given from above, we would not have it. Give God thanks!
1 Cor. 4:7
For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

- **Because of who Jesus is, "He Must Increase, but I must decrease" (v.30)**

See how exalted Jesus is by listening to John the Baptist's Testimony about Him:

John testified…

I. He is the Messiah, I am His forerunner (v.28)

John the Baptist had explicitly stated that he was not the Christ (Messiah) (Jn. 1:20). Instead John says, "I am the one sent out ahead of Him (i.e. the forerunner for Christ).

John prepared the way for the arrival of the Messiah, just as a forerunner would enter a town in which a dignitary was about to arrive and prepare the roads, the people, the reception, etc., for that person of nobility. John made preparations for the arrival of the Messiah.

John 1:23
He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

"Yet Jesus picked this enigma of a man to represent Him as His forerunner, a job with three primary functions: *to clear the way*—to remove obstacles from the minds and hearts of others so they would be ready for the Messiah; *to prepare the way*—to promote repentance on the part of the nation so He would be accepted; and *to get out of the way*—to step aside once the Messiah had been introduced." (Swindoll, p. 47).

II. He is the Groom, I am His "best man" (v.29)

Here John identifies Christ as the Bridegroom, and John as the friend of the bridegroom.

The groom (Jesus) has the bride (believers) and the "best man" rejoices in the blessing that the groom has. He is not envious that the groom has the bride (as Jesus had so many disciples); instead, he has joy.

The Church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-27; Rev. 19:6-9, 21:9, 22:17).

"In verse 29, John refers to himself as 'the friend of the bridegroom,' a rough equivalent to our culture's best man. According to Jewish tradition, the friend was a liaison between the bride and the bridegroom. He would arrange the details of the wedding—such as sending out invitations, making announcements, and presiding over the marriage feast. His special duty, however, was to guard the bridal chamber.

"He would let no one into that chamber except the bride, who secretly slipped away from the celebrating crowd to join the groom. Sometime later, after the union was consummated, the groom came out and announced the fact with a shout. Upon hearing the groom's voice, the friend of the bridegroom would be happy and relieved. His job was done. His joy was full. He could now step out of the way.

"John is saying, essentially, 'I'm like the friend. I do my task best when I've stepped out of the way.'

"How about you? Are you content to be the faceless, offstage voice announcing the star of the show? Can you give Jesus center stage while you operate the curtains and unveil Him to the audience? Can you turn the spotlight away from yourself and onto Him?

"You can if you become a person like John. . . if you're willing to play a minor part without upstaging the lead and stealing the show yourself.

That will be easy if Jesus is truly *first* in your life. And you can tell whether He is first if you're happy in second place, and if you're willing to surrender *any* spotlight to Him."
(Swindoll, p. 50-51)

Our purpose, like that of John, is to exult Christ and not ourselves. By my life, He must be lifted up, I must be lowered; He must have pre-eminence, I must be humble; He must get all the glory, I must shine the spotlight on Him and never self. May the Lord be magnified!

"A Presbyterian pastor in Melbourne, Australia, introduced J. Hudson Taylor by using many superlatives, especially the word *great*. Taylor stepped to the pulpit and quietly said, ''Dear friends, I am the little servant of an illustrious Master.' If John the Baptist in heaven heard that statement, he must have shouted 'Hallelujah!'" (Wiersbe, p. 297)

v. 30
"Must" –

"The word 'must' is used in three significant ways in this chapter. There is the 'must' of the sinner (Jn. 3:7), the 'must' of the Savior (Jn. 3:14), and the 'must' of the servant (Jn. 3:30)." (Wiersbe, p. 298)

III. He is from Heaven, I am of this world (v.31)

"He was not simply called from heaven, or empowered by heaven; He came from heaven" (Wiersbe, p. 298).

It is Jesus who came from above. He did not originate in Nazareth or Bethlehem; He did not begin to exist in Mary's womb. He is the Lord from Heaven who was "before Abraham."

Jesus said that He "came down from Heaven" (Jn. 6:33, 50; Note the Jew's reaction - v. 41, 42)

Jesus said: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day" (Jn. 8:56; cp. with Gen. 17:22, 18:22, 19:27).

Jesus said: "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8:58)

Jesus said that He was with the Father "before the world was" (Jn. 17:5, 24).

Jn. 1:1-3 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . All things were made by Him. . ."

I Cor. 10:4 - ". . . they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."
I Cor. 10:9 - ". . . let us not tempt Christ, as some of them [O.T. Israel] also tempted, and were destroyed of the serpents."

Col. 1:16-17 - "For by Him were all things created . . . and He is before all things . . ."

1. The virgin birth has nothing to do with the origin of Christ or the beginning of His existence. Rather, the virgin birth concerns only His entrance into the human race.

2. The entrance of Jesus into this life was totally distinct from that of ordinary men.

   For this reason, the writers of Scripture (under inspiration) carefully avoided using words such as "born" and "conceived" which tend to imply origin of existence.
   Note the terms and phrases used in the New Testament to describe Christ's incarnation:

a.	John 1:14	*"made flesh and dwelt among us"*
b.	John 3:16	*"He have His only begotten"*
c.	John 3:17	*"God sent...."*
d.	John 6:51	*"came down from Heaven" (Cp.Mt.20:28; Jn.3:13)*
e.	I Cor.15:47	*"the Lord from Heaven"*
f.	II Cor.8:9	*"He became poor"*
g.	Gal.4:4 "	*God sent forth his son...made of a woman"*
h.	Phil.2:7	*"made himself...took upon him..."*
i.	I Tim.1:15	*"came into the world"*
j.	I Tim.3:16	*"God was manifest in the flesh"*
k.	Heb.2:9	*"made a little lower than the angels"*
l.	Heb.2:14	*"Himself likewise took part...of flesh and blood"*
m.	I Jn.3:5	*"He was manifested to take away our sins"*

John 3:31

Because we are from this earth, we have conversations which involve the world (we speak about the world's weather, the world's fading glories, the details of this life. We go to school and what do we learn? Lessons that relate to the world, the material earth.).

However, Jesus was from another sphere and His message reflected that splendid reality.

When we converse with the natural man about spiritual things (EX: Heaven, God, salvation); such talk seems foolish to them. Why? Because they are locked into this earth only and all that pertains to it.

IV. He is precisely the Voice of God (v.32-34a)

v. 32
The **"he"** of verse 32 refers to the One who came from Heaven (v. 31). That is, Jesus Christ.

The things which Christ knows first hand (the things He knew before He entered the human race), the things of Heaven, were the topic of His discussions. Yet most of the world would not given Him an ear. They tuned Him out, like they still do today.

v. 33
Not all reject Christ's words. Some people (by God's grace) receive them and when they do, they know that Christ's message is true and it is from God.

v. 34
Jesus always and only spoke the words of God. To hear Him was to hear God. Why? Because He is God and yet was sent into the world by God the Father.

V. He is fully endowed with God's Spirit (v.34b)

Jesus ministered with the full measure of God's Spirit upon Him. He did not get a small portion of the Spirit's power as we do, as God does measure out a certain portion of the Spirit's strength, wisdom, and power to His saints.

But Jesus did not get a measured-out, meager, portion; rather the complete endowment.

VI. He is the ultimate authority over everything (v.35)

As the **"only begotten son"** of God, Jesus is "beloved" (cp. Eph. 1:6), the most special object of the Father's love.

And God the Father has given Jesus the Son all authority over everything

Mt. 28:18- "All authority is given unto me in Heaven and in earth";
Jn. 5:22 – The Father "judgeth no man but has committed all judgment unto the Son";
Rev. 1:18 – "I hold the keys of death and hell";
Col. 1:17 – "By Him all things consist (hold together)"

Everything has been given unto the Son. Hence, if you belong to the Son, you are a joint heir of all things! (Rom. 8)

VII. He is the exclusive source of eternal life (v.36)

Everyone on the earth falls into one of two categories:

--Those who believe and those who don't
--Those who have life and those who don't
--Those who are saved and those who are not
--Those who are under God's wrath and those who have been freed from it.

*The opportunity of faith is to all (**"He"**)
*The nature of faith is dependence upon (**"on"** or **"into"**)
*The object of faith is the **"Son"**
*The result of faith is eternal (never-ending) life
*The absence of faith is condemnation

Such condemnation begins now! Those who are unbelievers are already under God's wrath, even while they live, even before Judgment Day.

Conclusion:

Jesus Christ in every Book of the Bible

Old Testament

Genesis	--The Seed of the Woman	(3:16; Gal. 4:4)
	--The Seed of Abraham	(22:18; Gal. 3:16)
	--The Angel (messenger) of the Lord	(16:7-14; 21:17-21; 22:11, 18; 31:11-13)
	--Shiloh, who is to come	(49:10)
Exodus	--The Passover Lamb	(12:1-28; I Cor. 5:7)
	--The "I am"	(3:14; Jn. 8:58, 59; 18:6)
Leviticus	--The pre-figured bloody Sacrifice	(1-10, 16-17; Heb. 9-10)
Numbers	--One lifted up for salvation	(21:5-9; Jn. 3:14)
	--A star out of Jacob	(24:17; Lk. 3:34)
Deuteronomy	--Prophet like unto Moses	(18:18)
Joshua	--Captain of the Lord's Host	(5:13-15)
Judges	--The Angel of the LORD	(2:1-5, 6:11-24, 13:3-22)

Ruth	--Kinsman Redeemer (Boaz is a picture of Christ - chap. 3-4; I Pet. 1:18; Eph. 1:6,7; 5:25) --The protective wings of the LORD (2:12, Mt. 23:37)	
I Samuel	--The Rock	(2:2; Mt. 16:18)
II Samuel	--The Seed of David	(7:12, 13; Lk. 1:32, 33)
I Kings	--The Wisdom of God	(3:5-15, 3:28, 4:29; I Cor.1:24; Col. 2:3)
II Kings	--The Angel of the LORD	(1:3-4, 15)
I Chronicles	--The eternal King	(17:11-14; Heb. 1:5)
II Chronicles	--The eyes of the LORD	(16:9; Zech. 3:9, 4:10; Rev. 5:6)
Ezra	--Restorer of the temple	(theme of Ezra)
Nehemiah	--Restorer of the nation --The only Creator	(theme of Nehemiah) (9:6; cp. Col. 1:17)
Esther	--Our propitiation and advocate	(I Jn. 2:1-2)
Job	--Our Redeemer	(19:25)
Psalms	--The Son of God --Our Shepherd --Eternal God --The One sought by kings --The Cornerstone	(2:7, 12; Lk. 1:35) (23:1; John 10) (45:6; Heb. 1:8, 9) (72:10-15; Mt.2:1,2) (118:22; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20)
Proverbs	--Our wise Counselor	(8:14; cp. Is. 9:6; Col. 2:3)
Ecclesiastes	--Our Judge	(3:17, 12:14; II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:16)
Song of Solomon	--Rose of Sharon, lily of the valley --The Bridegroom	(2:1; Is. 35:1, 2) (Mt. 9:15, 25:1ff; Rev. 21:2, 9)
Isaiah	--Holy, holy, holy --Immanuel --Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the --Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace (9:6) --The root of David --A precious Cornerstone --The One wounded for our transgressions (53:5; I Pet. 2:24)	(6:1-3; Jn 12:41) (7:14; Mt. 1:23) (11:1; Rev. 55: Rom.15:12) (28:16; I Pet. 2:8)
Jeremiah	--The Lord our righteousness	(Jer. 23:6; II Cor. 5:21)

Lamentations	--The One who weeps over Jerusalem (Mt. 23:37-38) --The One who gave His cheek to the smiter (3:30; Is. 50:6; Mt. 26:67; Lk. 22:63)	
Ezekiel	--True Shepherd	(34:23; Heb. 13:20)
	--The Horn of the house of Israel	(29:21; Lk. 1:69)
Daniel	--Stone without hands	(2:34, 44-45)
	--The Son of man	(7:13-14)
	--Messiah the Prince	(9:25; Jn. 1:41; 4:25, 26)
Hosea	--The Ransom	(13:14; I Cor. 15:55)
	--The Son out of Egypt	(11:1; Mt. 2:15)
Joel	--The Judge in the Day of the LORD	(2-3; Rev. 16:14-19, 19:11-21)
Amos	--The Lord of hosts (armies)	(6:8; 9:5; Zech. 14:4; Rev. 19:14)
Obadiah	--The LORD of Retribution	(v. 15)
Jonah	--The Lover of men's souls	(4:10-11)
Micah	--The eternal Ruler	(5:2; Mt. 2:6)
Nahum	--The God of vengeance	(1:2; Heb. 10:30)
Habakkuk	--The God of justice	(the theme of Habakkuk)
Zephaniah	--The wrath of the LORD	(1:15, 18; Rev.6:16, 17)
Haggai	--"The Desire of all nations"	(2:7)
Zechariah	--The smitten Shepherd	(13:7, cp. Mt. 26:31)
	--The One "they have pierced"	(12:10; Jn.20:37)
Malachi	--The LORD (Jehovah) whom ye seek	(3:1; cp. Mk. 1:2, 3)
	--The Sun of Righteousness	(4:2)

New Testament

Matthew	--The King	(2:2, 21:5)
	--Jesus	(Mt. 1:21)
Mark	--The Servant	(10:43-45)
Luke	--The Son of man	(6:5, 9:22-58, 21:27)
John	--The living Word	(1:1)
	--The Lamb of God	(1:14)
	--The Son of God	(1:34)
	--The Judge	(5:22, 27)
	--The Bread of life	(6:32, 35)
	--The Light of the world	(8:12)
	--I am	(8:58; 18:6)
	--The Door	(10:9)
	--The Good Shepherd	(10:11)
	--The Resurrection and Life	(11:25)
	--The Way, Truth, and Life	(14:6)
	--My Lord and my God	(John 20:28)
Acts	--Salvation unto the ends of the earth	(13:47)
Romans	--Our Propitiation and our Justifier	(3:24, 25)
I Corinthians	--The Foundation	(3:11)
	--The last Adam	(15:45)
II Corinthians	--Our grace all sufficient	(12:9)
Galatians	--Redeemer from the curse of the Law	(3:13)
Ephesians	--Head of the church	(1:20-23)
Philippians	--The Name above every name	(2:9-11)
Colossians	--Altogether preeminent	(1:16-18)
I Thessalonians	--The One coming	(4:16)
II Thessalonians	--The One who will judge in flaming fire	(1:7-8, 2:8)
I Timothy	--The Mediator	(2:5)
II Timothy	--The One who abolished death	(1:10) the Judge of the living and the dead (4:1, 8)

Titus	--Blessed hope	(2:13)
	--Great God and Savior	(2:13)
Philemon	--Settler of the account	(the theme of Philemon)
Hebrews	--God	(1:8)
	--Our great high Priest	(4:14)
	--The final sacrifice	(9:26, 10:10)
	--The Author and Finisher of our faith	(12:2)
James	--The LORD of glory	(2:1)
I Peter	--The suffering Savior	(3:18)
II Peter	--Day Star	(1:19; cp. Num. 24:17)
I John	--Our Advocate	(2:1)
II John	--The Son of the Father in truth and love	(v.3 cp. Jn.5:18)
	--The One Who is come in the flesh	(v.7)
III John	--The truth	(v.1,3,4,12; cp. John 14:6)
Jude	--The One who is able to keep us from falling	(v.24)
Revelation	--The Amen	(3:14)
	--Alpha and Omega	(1:8, 11; 21:6)
	--King of kings and Lord of lords	(19:15,16)
	--The Root and Offspring of David, and the --Bright and morning Star	(22:16)

It's all about Jesus Christ. It's not about John the Baptist; It's not about us. It's not about you.

Jesus is to be exalted.