

In The Beginning Was The Word

John 3: 22-36

HE THAT BELIEVES NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY.

- NOW HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL NOT SEE LIFE; BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM

INTRODUCTION:

John stresses the deity of Jesus Christ. John's message is about Jesus must be exalted above all. In these verses that follow in this chapter we see a continuous dialog between the Jews that heard John's message and the doubt in them that follows regardless of that message. Even though John had given and presented to the Jews the messiah he was and would continually be rejected as can be seen from the scriptures here this morning.

John 3:22-36

²² **After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.**

1. After the incident with Nicodemus the Lord and His disciples move on into a new field of witness, which meant that they had to go to Judea, which was up from Jerusalem where that had been.
2. This was the Lord's whole purpose; was that he came to seek and to save those who were "spiritually lost". It was not to partake in the Jewish feasts and parties or to have a good time or a good meal, but it was for the sole purpose to seek out those who were spiritually lost and condemned.
 - The land of Judea was the biblical name of the mountainous southern West Bank. The name originates from the biblical tribe of Judah and associated Kingdom of Judah. The name of the region continued to be incorporated through the Babylonian conquest, Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods as Babylonian Judea, Persian Judea, Hasmonean Judea, and consequently Herodian Judea and Roman Judea, respectively.
 - The name *Judea* is a Greek and Roman adaptation of the name "Judah", which originally encompassed the territory of the Israelite tribe of that name and later of the ancient Kingdom of Judah.
 - Judea was sometimes used as the name for the entire region, including parts beyond the river Jordan.
 - Judea was the name in use in English until the Jordanian occupation of the area in 1948. Jordan called the area the "West Bank"). "Yehuda" is the Hebrew term used for the area in modern Israel since the region was captured and occupied by Israel in 1967.
 - Judea is a mountainous region, part of which is considered a desert. It varies greatly in height, rising to an altitude of 1,020 m in the south at Mount Hebron,

30 km southwest of Jerusalem, and descending to as much as 400 m *below* sea level in the east of the region.

3. This is clearly a very big land area, and a place which was spiritually lost under the Jewish religion. This indeed was a place where the Lord could work His miracles and change the hearts of many.
4. As the Lord came to this place "Judea", He never came alone but was accompanied by His disciples, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, Simon (Cephas). They were to be an invaluable comfort to the Lord and help Him in His mission.

The bible says here in verse 22, "**and there he tarried with them, and baptized.**"

- A. This was to be the place where the Lord would spend a significant amount of time with His disciples, as he revealed himself to the nation of Israel there. (the Jews).
- B. It would be the place where many Jews and other converts from the Gentiles, publicans and the poor would be "baptized" spiritually – THIS WAS NOT WATER BAPTISM BUT THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST. – THE FORGIVER OF SINS.

²³ ***And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.***

1. At the same time that Jesus and His disciples were in Judea John was also in the neighboring town of Enon, near to Salim.
 2. This was not more than 30kms away, where John was still baptizing with water. ***Aenon near to Salim*** was along the Jordon river, between the Sea of Galilee in the north and the Dead Sea towards the south.
 3. Along the Jordon River were many streams flowing into the Jordon River which served as ideal pools of water for baptism.
 4. The verses here in verse 23, tell us that ***there was much water there***.
 5. Water was necessary for the witness of John for the baptism of those converting from other religions to follow the Lord Jesus. He was paving the way for the people to turn from their idol worship and paganism, and Jewish religion to worship the one and only true God and Messiah. (*remember that the Jews used baptism to convert gentiles*)
 6. The *means of their repentance* was to turn from their ways of worship to the worship of the Messiah. For anyone to denounce their religion it meant that an open air baptism was their way of showing openly their willingness and repentance to turn from sin and embrace the Messiah Jesus the Christ.
- A. The scripture in verse 23 also tell us that this is in fact what happened. People were coming to turn their lives around, they were not just coming to change religions; they were coming to turn their lives around because of Jesus.
 - B. To turn from the darkness of paganism and the lifeless life of Judaism to the living God of Jesus the Messiah. The bible puts it like this; "***and they came, and were baptized.***"
 - C. **Aenon** is a Greek word coming from a Hebrew term "ay-yin". It means "spring" or "natural fountain" and was a place near Salem where John the Baptist baptized (John 3:23).

²⁴ For John was not yet cast into prison.

1. We read about John's account of being thrown into prison and later executed for his boldness in presenting the truth to all those that he met without exception.
2. This of course would and did undoubtedly lead to his capture imprisonment and execution. This we can read in Luke 3:19-20.
3. The scripture is again a testimony and a forecast and a fact to the witness of John, as one who would have to bear his cross for the Lord.

Luke 3:19-20

¹⁹ *But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,*

²⁰ *Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.*

- That is why today, people joke about "don't shoot me I am only the messenger". Because people are aware what the truth can do to a person. It makes them very angry when their sin is exposed.
- In John's case he had made the king angry for exposing his sin.

²⁵ Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. (Ceremonial washing)

1. Even though John had been saying the same thing to all the Jews and gentiles and pagans and every unbeliever alike going back as far as Chapter 1 when he introduced himself as the one who was the forerunner of Christ, and as the one who introduced the Lord when he said "behold the Lamb of God, who takes away sin".
2. Yet even after all this, the Jews were still not convinced and started their revolt against the Lord.
3. It started with one or two Jews murmuring but soon it spread to all Jews.
4. The Jews were definitely not happy with the one who called himself the messiah. And they were definitely not happy with John for introducing Him to the world.
5. Their dissension is clearly seen here in verse 25.
 - A. We find here that the form of dissention started out as a question to John's disciples. The Jews did not even go to the source of their problem but went behind John's back, like so many people do today when they have a problem with someone.
 - B. The question that they were asking the disciples of John was about that of "**about purifying**".
 - C. I guess that from the response that they got from the disciples was one of go and ask John yourself if you want to know. Why come to us behind his back". This then sets the tone and question again presented to John.
 - D. See how they address John as Rabbi. They were deceitful and tried to use his position as one to listen to their question.
 - E. Here is how it unfolds in verse 26.

²⁶ And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

1. Rabbi, as if it say master or great teacher?
 2. Can you remember the person "**that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness?**"
 3. This was as if to remind the great teacher of something or someone that they had a problem with and wanted him to address?
 4. They were in effect trying to criticize or minimize the effect of Jesus teachings and baptism. This they tried to do by comparing John's baptism to Jesus baptism, as if to say John you have competition on your hands now.
- A. The very nature of this question that was presented to John was a sure sign to John that they had missed the whole point and had missed the messiah as well.
- B. They had not taken heed to what John had told them that was from the OT neither did they listen to him when he presented Jesus as the messiah to them. Instead they were looking for every trick in the book to cause dissension between John and his Lord so that they could get rid of this man Jesus.
- C. It was very obvious to John what they were trying to do. But watch how John responds to them who are remember "spiritually blind".

➤ **Point 1 from John in verse 27.**

²⁷ John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

1. **A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.**
2. What does that mean? It means that a person cannot receive anything if it were withheld by God himself. This would include the very breath that he takes.
3. In this case here John reminds the Jews about something that they already knew from the OT. And that was God is the one who is in control not man?
4. This much they did agree on and did know, therefore John continues with that train of thought for them to understand better.
5. He wanted them to know and understand that Jesus is the only one who baptizes with the Holy Ghost, which is the spiritual breath of life. This is the life that is given and comes from heaven above that John was talking about.

²⁸ Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

1. First of all John straightens out the scene about his position in relation to God.
2. Secondly, he reminds them of the fact that he had told them that he is not Christ, but a witness that was sent to proclaim his name and to present the messiah. Something also that they could not deny.
3. Now he proceeds to tell them about the relationship that they should have with that messiah in verse 29.

²⁹ He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

1. The relationship of the bridegroom in relation to the bride is explained.
2. The relationship is such that a bride cannot be in a relationship with a bridegroom if there is no relationship to start with. How can a bridegroom have a bride who does not exist?

Isaiah 62:5⁵ For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

3. You can only be a bridegroom if you have a bride (in which case they the Jews were not).
4. But the “***but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly.*** This is because he that is the friend of the bridegroom is one who will come to know the bridegroom in that relationship.
5. In essence we should all be friends of that bridegroom that we may come to him for salvation. John speaks of himself as being a friend of that bridegroom the Lord, and rejoices about it.

³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease.

1. The whole point of John's message was to elevate the messiah to his rightful position as God.
2. In response to the question of the Jews John reminds them that Jesus the messiah must be the one who is held high up in righteousness, and that he John, just as we and the Jews should take up a position to decrease our importance when we are talking about Jesus our God the messiah of mankind.

➤ How can Jesus be held up high, when we put ourselves on a pedestal.

³¹ He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

1. Sometimes there is much confusion when we look to ourselves and other men or people of this world.
2. We forget about our immortality and think that we will go on forever, and our lifestyles sometimes reflect that.
3. We forget that God is above all of us, and that we will need to give an account one day to him.

2 Corinthians 5:10

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the **things done** in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

4. In verse 31, it reminds us of these very facts, "**He that cometh from above is above all.**"
5. Verse 31 also reminds us and those Jews that John was speaking to that "**he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth.**" He told them that our conversation is based on earthly things and our life is earthly. It is something that cannot have control over the heavenly realm.

The remainder of the verse which John told the Jews was this "**he that cometh from heaven is above all.**" And I don't think that they liked that very much, but nevertheless it was the truth. God is above all. God is from heaven not from the earth where we can boss Him about.

6. John answered the Jews with the word of God from the OT. It was what they had already known and found it difficult to argue against.
7. That is why we see the response from John in verse 32. He continues in the same way to the Jews who had asked him those questions about Jesus Baptizing.

³² ***And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.***

1. The witness of Jesus Himself is the witness of the Word of God.
2. It was the OT being revealed before their very eyes and they found it difficult to believe.
3. Jesus testified of Himself, the same way that we saw in the earlier verse of John 3:16. In the third person view.
4. So this is His testimony "**And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.**"
5. The Lord testified but they did not believe. "**and no man receiveth his testimony.**"
6. This is what Malachi and Isaiah said would happen, and the Jews were as blind as what the prophets had predicted.

Malachi 3:1

1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 53:1

*Who hath believed **our report?** and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*

John 12:38

*That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed **our report?** and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

Romans 10:16

*But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed **our report?***

³³ ***He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.***

1. A person who believes in Jesus Christ as God the messiah has set a seal for salvation to the messiah.
2. It is a person who believes every word of God to be true, and has embraced the testimony of Christ as being true.
3. It is a person who believes that God is true.

³⁴ ***For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.***

1. Just like God had sent John to be the fore runner to present the messiah unto us.
2. So to are we to embrace Jesus as the one "***whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.***
3. ***God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*** – This means that Gods Spirit was upon Jesus without measure or limit. Thus Jesus was the highest revelation of God to man.

Hebrews 1:2

² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

4. Imagine how those Jews must had felt as John would proclaim these words to them about the Lord Jesus, the one whom they had come to dispute about.

³⁵ ***The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.***

1. These are the very words given to us in Matthew 28:18.

Matthew 28:18 ¹⁸ *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

2. Imagine for a moment that when John was talking to the Jews and he quotes this one verse from the OT. How it must have left them speechless.

Daniel 7:14

¹⁴ *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

³⁶ ***He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.***

1. This verse is the same verse that Jesus had used when he spoke to Nicodemus. (John 3:18-19)
2. I find it appropriate that John would use the same words here.
3. The closing departing verses to the Jews who had started the debate about purification, was a word of warning but yet a word of salvation.

4. If only they had turned to the scripture in the OT, they would have seen that the just should live by faith.

Habakkuk 2:4 *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

5. The choice that John left them was the choice that the Lord had left Nicodemus.
6. Either accept or reject. You choose.
7. But choose wisely.

Galatians 3:10 ¹⁰ *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

PRAYER.....CLOSE