# Week Seven

# ***he must increase***

##### John 3:22-36

For one last time, our author records the testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus. He will be referred to frequently in the days ahead, but never again will his voice be heard … all must listen to Jesus.

## Day One

The author of the Gospel concludes this account with a deliberate contrast between Jesus and John. We will begin today with considering their baptizing.

*Father,*

*Show me the value of your Son and His testimony. Touch my heart to believe that you are true and to obey your Son.*

*Amen*

1. What does the phrase *“after this”* indicate *(3:22; Matthew 4:12; 3:24)?*
2. Why were both Jesus and John baptizing *(3:22-23; 4:2)?*

## Day Two

As John’s disciples proclaimed baptism, there was an objection from an unidentified Jew. They got into a dispute over the Jewish rituals of purification *(2:6).* The Law has a good deal to say about water making clean *(for example, Leviticus 11:32, 36; 14:8-9; Numbers 19:12; 31:23).*

*Holy Lord*

*You want me to be clean. Purify me that I might serve you with clean hands and a clean heart. Teach me today how to be pure.*

*Amen*

1. What was the discussion about *(3:25)?*
2. What was the outcome of the discussion *(3:26)*?
3. How did John answer His disciples *(3:27-30)?*

*Why do you think it is important to keep our focus on Jesus Christ and not on the prestige of our leaders?*

## Day Three

Twice the author uses wedding customs to illustrate truths about Jesus. It is a theme he will return to later on in *Revelation 19:6-10; 21:2.*

*Father,*

*You are the Author of Marriage and of the Wedding Feast. Help me to remember that Your glory is more important than my foolish pride.*

*Amen*

1. What was the point of John’s illustration of the bridegroom and his friend *(3:29)?*
2. What contrasts does the author make between the John and Jesus *(3:31-32)?*
3. What two reactions to Jesus testimony are presented *(3:32-33)?*
4. What is claimed for Jesus’ testimony *(3:34)?*

*If Jesus’ words have this importance, then why don’t people pay attention to what He said?*

## Day Four

John’s testimony to Jesus is recorded in chapter 3 for the last time in the Gospel. As we spend our final day considering what he said about Jesus, prepare your heart in prayer.

*Father,*

*There is nothing more important in life than to hear Your words through Your Son. Give me faith to believe and receive the promise.*

*Amen*

1. What promise comes to those who believe the Son *(3:35-36)?*
2. What penalty comes upon those who do not believe *(3:36)?*
3. What is John’s opinion of Jesus *(3:27-28, 30)?*

*What is your opinion of Jesus after seven weeks of study? How has it change as a result of reading this far in John’s Gospel?*

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## Bonus Material

Competition between John’s disciples and those of Jesus was not encouraged by either leader. Such diversionary activity would take away from the main event—God sent his Son into the world to bring salvation to the lost. Twenty-three times in this book John records references by Jesus to the one who sent him.[[1]](#footnote-1)

vv. 22-23 What did water baptism mean here? According to Leon Morris, “More probably it represents a continuation of the ‘baptism of repentance’ that was characteristic of John the Baptist. Both Jesus and his first disciples had come from the circle around John, and it may well be that for some time they continued to call on men to submit to the baptism that symbolized repentance … The tense of the last two verbs is continuous and we might give the force of it as ‘they kept coming and being baptized.’ ”

The site of **Aenon near Salim** is unknown today but a likely location is about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea (and about three miles east of Shechem).[[2]](#footnote-2)

vv. 26-30 These verses revolve around a dialogue between John the Baptist and some of his disciples. Apparently these disciples of John are unhappy because the "Johnny come lately," Jesus, has begun to attract larger crowds than their master. John’s response demonstrates his understanding and acceptance of his role. He was not the Messiah, only his herald.

v. 29 **The bride belongs to the bridegroom** . . . John the Baptist likens himself to the "best man" at a wedding, whose job it is to see that the bride and groom are united. This figure of speech was used in the Old Testament to describe the relationship between God, the bridegroom, and His people, the bride (Ho. 2:16-20). The New Testament also uses this metaphor to describe the relationship between Christ and the church (2 Cor. 11:12; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 21:1-2, 9).

vv. 31-36 These verses seem to be the editorial comments of John (the author, not the Baptist).

vv. 31-32 The "one who comes from above" is Christ; the "one who is from the earth" is John the Baptist. Christ is superior to John the Baptist because his origin is heaven. Thus Christ is able to speak of what he has "seen and heard;" his teaching consists of eyewitness testimony.

vv. 33-34 The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful . . . Believing Christ is synonymous with believing God; disbelieving Christ is the same as calling God a liar (Jn. 8:28-29; 12:44-50; 1 Jn. 5:10).

v. 36 John presents the choice very clearly: eternal life or God’s wrath. There are no other alternatives.

1. Kenneth O. Gangel, *John*, vol. 4, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Edwin A. Blum, “John,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary:* vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 282. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)