

Expository Thoughts On John - JOHN 3:22-36

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

Further Testimony About Jesus by John the Baptist

After this, Jesus and his disciples came into Judean territory, and there he spent time with them and was baptizing. John was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized. (For John had not yet been thrown into prison.)

Now a dispute came about between some of John's disciples and a Jew concerning ceremonial washing. So they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River, about whom you testified--see, he is baptizing, and everyone is flocking to him!"

John replied, "No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but rather, 'I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands by and listens for him, rejoices greatly when he hears the bridegroom's voice. This then is my joy, and it is complete. He must become more important while I become less important."

The one who comes from above is superior to all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is superior to all. He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The one who has accepted his testimony has confirmed clearly that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he does not give the Spirit sparingly. The Father loves the Son and has placed all things under his authority. The one who believes in the Son has eternal life. The one who rejects the Son will not see life, but God's wrath remains on him.

On one account, this passage deserves the special attention of all devout readers of the Bible. It contains the last testimony of John the Baptist concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. That faithful man of God was the same at the end of his ministry that he was at the beginning. the same in his views of self--the same in his views of Christ. Happy is that church whose ministers are as steady, bold, and constant to one thing, as John the Baptist!

We have, firstly, in these verses, a humbling example of the petty jealousies and party-spirit which may exist among professors of religion. We are told, that the disciples of John the Baptist were offended, because the ministry of Jesus began to attract more attention than that of their master. "They came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with you beyond Jordan, to whom you barest witness, behold

the same baptizes, and all men come to him."

The spirit exhibited in this complaint, is unhappily too common in the Churches of Christ. The succession of these complainers has never failed. There are never lacking religions professors who care far more for the increase of their own party, than for the increase of true Christianity; and who cannot rejoice in the spread of religion, if it spreads anywhere except within their own denomination. There is a generation which can see no good being done, except in the ranks of its own congregations; and which seems ready to shut men out of heaven, if they will not enter therein under their banner.

The true Christian must watch and pray against the spirit here manifested by John\

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