



SESSION 15 | JOHN 3:27-33

A FOLLOW UP NOTE ABOUT JOHN 3:16

- The “shock and awe” that some people had (on YouTube comments) over my suggestion that John 3:16 (verses 13-21, actually) were not spoken by Jesus deserves some discussion.
- Most importantly: the removal of these words from the mouth of Jesus does not remove them from the truth of Scripture. They are absolutely true in our dispensation.
- However, to place these words in the mouth of Jesus and have them spoken to Nicodemus does have problems that must be addressed.
 - Why did Jesus suddenly shift to speaking in third person? –not impossible to overcome, but this cannot be ignored.
 - Why did Jesus speak of Himself as being **in heaven** when He was in front of John (v. 13)? I would not accept any kind of answer which simply spiritualizes this problem away.
 - Why did Jesus share a gospel to Nicodemus that had no place for the Law? Was He suggesting that Nicodemus ignore the law? Was He suggesting that the Law had no place in inheriting the Kingdom (v. 3)? If so, why did He contradict Himself on so many other occasions (Matt. 5:19, Lk. 11:42, etc)?
 - Why would Jesus, a **minister of the circumcision** (Rom. 15:8) be speaking a Gospel that is to all the world (when in other places He did not allow the kingdom message to go to all the world?)
 - How could Jesus be telling Nicodemus to simply *believe* when the work of Christ had not been completed and *nobody alive* had enough knowledge to place their faith in the work in advance? (Lk. 18:31-34).
- However, if these truthful words were spoken by the author of the Gospel *after the completed work of Jesus Christ* then they make perfect sense.

JOHN 3:22-4:3 | JESUS IN JUDEA

- Verses 22-26 – see session 14
- Verse 27 –
 - John’s answer relates specifically to what is taking place with Jesus and His disciples. It would be dangerous to build a doctrine that viewed all things whatsoever as being **given...from heaven** (as Reformed Theology has done).
 - For an “all things” doctrine, one would need a passage that teaches in a more general context.
 - The strongest position Biblically is that during this age of grace God has given man the full revelation and the ability to do with it as he pleases, and that God is not dealing punishment nor reward during our day.
- Verse 28 –
 - This verse adds evidence that the previous verse is solely in the context to the recent baptismal work of Jesus and His disciples. It also serves to tell John’s disciples that this is all “to be expected.”
- Verse 29 –

- A note of warning is needed: *illustrations are not doctrine*.
- John the Baptist is giving an *illustration* that shows nothing more than what he had explicitly stated in verse 28: **I am not the Christ**.
 - In verse 29, John is illustrating the fact that he is **the friend of the bridegroom**.
 - He could have used a medical, legal, military, or athletic illustration and no doctrine would be associated with it.
 - Sadly, since John mentions **bridegroom**, and since the church has a fixation on being the bride, some kind of doctrine of “the bride of Christ” is often read into this verse. There is no such doctrine in verse 29.
- Verse 30 –
 - These famous words of John *possibly* conclude John’s words (see note on v. 31). They certainly reiterate the point which John has been making and give the ultimate answer to the issue of verse 26.
 - Note that later, after a dispensational change, Paul will say, **I magnify mine office** (Rom. 11:13). John was approaching the end of a dispensational change. Paul was at the beginning of a dispensational change. Comparing these two verses, one can only conclude that dispensationalism is valid OR that Paul was arrogant and needed a dose of John’s humility.
- Verses 31-36 – Note on John 3:31-36 - These verses are typically taken to be a continuation of John the Baptist’s words, and they could be. However, like in vv. 13-21, these could be words of the Gospel writer, and thus commentary given “after the fact.” This study will take the approach that the words are from the Gospel writer and not John the Baptist.
- Verse 31 –
 - The continuation of the **He** in reference to Christ is evidence that John the Baptist is speaking. This would be the most natural reading.
 - However, the content is so similar to the writer’s commentary of vv. 13-21 that it could well be that the author has again shifted to commentary. Note that verse 13 speaks of, **he that came down from heaven**, and verse 30 speaks of, **He that cometh from above**.
 - The teaching of the verse is that Jesus is the Christ and thus **cometh from above** and is able to speak of things from a heavenly perspective. Recall that the purpose of the fourth Gospel is to convince the Jewish people to believe that Jesus is Messiah.
- Verse 32 –
 - This verse strongly argues for *author’s commentary* rather than the words of John.
 - In the context, **all men come to him** (v. 26), so how could John the Baptist answer with **no man receiveth his testimony?**
 - However, if the author of the Gospel is giving “post-game analysis,” (as we presume), then this comment is perfectly aligned.
 - This would also align with the author’s commentary in John 1:10-11, and 3:19, but would nowhere align with the words of John the Baptist.
- Verse 33 –
 - These words align perfectly with the author’s commentary in John 1:11-12. Presumably, by the time the author is writing the Gospel, the Jews had fully rejected Jesus as Messiah (as the closing words of verse 33 imply). However, there were some who did not reject but **hath received his testimony** (v. 33) and have thus the believer **hath set to his seal that God is true** (given unwavering testimony). Once again, this is the purpose and desire of the fourth Gospel.