

Calvary Chapel Viewpoint Care Group

Study in John *Competition in Ministry*

John 3:22–36 (ESV)

²² After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing.

²³ John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized
²⁴ (for John had not yet been put in prison).

²⁵ Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification.

²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him."

²⁷ John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'

²⁹ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease."

³¹ He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.

³² He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.

³³ Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true.

³⁴ For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Competition in Ministry

By this time, John the Baptist had achieved a great deal of popularity as the result of his preaching and baptizing. But he is no longer the only one baptizing. While in the Judean countryside, the disciples of our Lord baptized those who came to them. At the same time, John and his disciples were also baptizing.

Note: We would expect that John's baptism had not changed from what it had always been. His was a baptism of repentance in preparation for the coming of Messiah. Our Lord's baptism—or rather the baptism our Lord's disciples conducted in His name—was essentially the same as John's. His disciples could not baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit yet since our Lord had not yet been crucified, buried, and risen from the dead.

Verse 22 Who was doing the baptizing in the Judean countryside?

Verse 23 "People were constantly coming to be baptized." Describe John's ministry.

What do we see going on between the disciples of Jesus and those of John the Baptist in verses 25-26?

How would you describe the attitude of John the Baptist's disciples?

Application: Are there any places we see examples of comparison and competition in the church today? Have you experienced it?

Verses 27-30 How would you describe the attitude of John the Baptist?

What does John the Baptist's response to the dissention in verses 27-30 tell us about him?

Application: Like John the Baptist, do you know your purpose in life? Perhaps you have a calling to minister to those in the military and/or their families! Your purpose/ministry/calling is not in competition with anyone else.

Why was John the Baptist able to remain humble in the midst of all this notoriety?

Is there any example from John the Baptist's life for us to follow?

Application: How can we get to be humble like John the Baptist? Meditate, study, and read the Word of God so that you can increasingly comprehend the hugeness of God, the magnitude of the sacrifice (the Cross), and the depths of your own depravity.

Verses 31- 35 John documents the supremacy of Jesus Christ. How is Jesus superior?

Verse 36 What are the two options given to us in this verse?

Application: Because of His supremacy, how will you react? What are you going to do with Jesus Christ?

Conclusion: The most important question anyone can ask and answer is, "Who is Jesus Christ?"