

Gospel of John Study Notes

John 3b – Jesus and John the Baptist

The Gospel of John, Chapter 3, contains the most often quoted verse by evangelical Christians, “For God so loved the world...”

The second part of the chapter echoes the lesson in John 3:36, but from John the Baptist’s perspective. Today, we’ll focus on part 2:

- John 3:1-21, Jesus Teaches Nicodemus
- John 3:22-36, Jesus & John the Baptist



Jesus and John the Baptist

The first part of chapter 3 focuses on the interaction between Israel’s Teacher (Nicodemus) and Jesus the Rabbi. John shifts the focus to his former Rabbi, John the Baptist to hear his teaching on “the Lamb of God.”

Lots of Baptizing: Was Jesus himself baptizing? (Look ahead to John 4:2)

The Apostle John gives us a glimpse into an argument among John the Baptist’s disciples concerning ceremonial washing. Notice how John ties chapter 2 and 3 neatly together in this brief discussion.

- John the Baptist is incredibly patient
- Jesus doesn’t expend any effort to derail John’s ministry
- These “cousins” are in ministry together
- By John 5:33-36, John the Baptist is spoken about in past tense terms

John the Baptist is the epitome of selflessness. He is the excited best man at the wedding. We need to learn from his example. It’s clear that the Apostle John wants us to see this quite clearly in this passage.

- Why does the Apostle John provide such emphasis on John the Baptist?

John 3:31-36 is like the shift we saw in 3:16-21. Compare the two sections. Do you hear the Apostle’s voice in both instances?

The beginning of this section sets up the concluding remarks: Jesus spent some time with them. I can imagine they had lots of questions about the Nicodemus encounter the night before. Jesus invests time into his disciples to teach them. John gives us the important highlights.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.

John 3:36

John 3:22-36

New International Version

John Testifies Again About Jesus

²² After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. ²³ Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. ²⁴ (This was before John was put in prison.)

²⁵ An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. ²⁶ They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

²⁷ To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.' ²⁹ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰ He must become greater; I must become less."

³¹ The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. ³³ Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴ For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.