



Gospel of John 1-12

He Must Increase I Must Decrease

Up to this point in the Gospel of John, John the Baptist had enjoyed tremendous popularity, while Jesus remained in obscurity. Although His cleansing of the temple had

broken Him out of that anonymity and created a sensation, Jesus still had only a handful of followers. That changed, as the crowds that had been following John left him and flocked to Jesus. Thus, Christ would move to the forefront, and John would fade from the scene, giving his final testimony to the Messiah.

A. Ministries in Transition *John 3:22-30*

1. Jesus and John baptizing: [:22-24] Jesus and the disciples left Jerusalem and went to the wilderness area of Judea and ‘remained’ there. They may have been there for up to three months. Jesus did not baptize but, his disciples did (*John 4:2*). John also was baptizing—both groups continued in ministry.

Note: The Synoptic Gospels do not include these early events as John does. John notes that John the Baptizer was not yet in prison as a way to date the events.

B. End of the Old *John 3:25-30*

1. The dispute: John’s followers come to him because they are alarmed that Jesus’ ministry is now growing faster than John’s.

2. The facts: [:27-30] John reminds them that his ministry was given to him by God from heaven and that his ministry was ALWAYS focused on preparing the way for the Messiah.

3. Friend of the bridegroom: The friend of the bridegroom made all the arraignments for the wedding and John uses this to illustrate his role in the coming of the Messiah.

4. From old to new: [:30] This famous verse can apply to all of us...He must increase while I decrease.

C. Birth of the New *John 3:31-36*

John the baptizer now shares with his disciples (and us) five reasons for them to follow Jesus:

1. He had a heavenly origin [:31] Christ is the ‘One’ who descended from heaven and is ‘above’ all. John’s preaching was bold and persuasive, yet he was just a man—sent from God. Jesus, in contrast, was God incarnate.

2. He knew the truth firsthand [:32] (*See also Heb 1:1-2*) God spoke through the prophets of whom John the Baptist was one. But now through His Son. Jesus is the source of divine revelation. Yet sadly...not many received the revelation.

3. His testimony always agreed with God [:33] However, there are some who do receive His testimony. Believers ‘seal’ or ‘sign off’ and certify by their belief that God is true.

4. He experienced the power of the Holy Spirit without limit [:34] Since ‘in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form’ (*Col 2:9*), there were no limits to the Spirit’s power in Him.

5. He received all authority from the Father [:35-36] The Father gives all authority to the Son who set forth the only choices available to the lost.

John 3:22-36 (NKJV)

22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.

23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized.

24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

25 Then there arose a dispute between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purification.

26 And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!”

27 John answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to 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 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

32 And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

33 He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.

34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.

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

36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”