

Gospel of John (lesson 10)

John 3:22-36

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.)

The Holy Spirit was stirring the hearts of the people to wake them from their spiritual slumber with a call to baptism. The people responded and came to be baptized. John was not the only one baptizing, Jesus was also baptizing in the same area.

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."

As soon as you get your ministry going, squabbles and friction start to cause problems. You can almost hear the whining in his voice as you read the words. We are witnessing the force that has caused denominations in the church today. Those who are the most passionate about their ministry tend to see things only from their own viewpoint. They were baptizing first and did not want Jesus to compete with them.

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.'

John was able to see past the ministry of the moment and receive the big picture of God's plan. He understood his purpose was to identify the Messiah and pass on the ministry of the priesthood to Jesus. John understood that each one of us are a part of God's plan, and that we must focus on what our task is. He had his orders from heaven and he was carrying them out.

Gospel of John (lesson 10)

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." [Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 36]

Verse 30 is a scripture we need to apply to our lives. We are not to accept the attention or glory of our ministry. It all belongs to Jesus who performs the ministry through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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.

Jesus came from heaven and is telling us the truth he brings from heaven. God gives the Spirit without limit, so Jesus had complete control of all that he told about heaven.

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.

Jesus is the only way to eternal life. We must accept Jesus' testimony and his instructions because God the Father has given him complete control.