

**A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS**  
**XXIV. John's Final Potent Testimony Of Messiah**  
**(John 3:22-36)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. John had rightly introduced Jesus to his followers that they might follow Him, John 1:35-37.
- B. The ministry of Christ overlapped John the Baptizer's ministry for a period of time, and during that time, more people were flocking after Jesus than after John, which left room for onlookers to witness whether John was secretly self-centered and offended at his ministry decline or if he indeed truly supported Jesus as the Messiah.
- C. John's response to Christ's growing popularity at John's own expense as noted in John 3:22-36 provided the most potent part of John's testimony, one we do well to heed for our own insight, application and edification:

**II. John's Final Potent Testimony Of Messiah, John 3:22-36.**

- A. When John presented Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah to Israel, John's ministry "did not cease with the inception of Jesus' ministry," for both preached the message of repentance for the nearness of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 3:2; 4:17). (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 128)
- B. Also, both ministries were similar, involving the baptism of repentance in readiness for the kingdom, with Jesus ministering in Judea where John baptizing at Aenon near Salim in the Jordan River, Jn. 3:22-23; Ibid.
- C. "Evidently some Jews sought to discredit John because he did not properly follow the Jewish tradition concerning cleansing with water, and they sought to generate a conflict between John and Jesus (v. 26)" to "dissipate the effectiveness of the ministry" of both by provoking "John and his disciples to jealousy" in reporting that Jesus was baptizing more people John baptized! (Ibid., John 3:24-26)
- D. Had John ministered with false motives, news of Jesus' greater ministry would have exposed a jealous spirit in John. However, the opposite occurred, so that John's last testimony of Jesus was his most potent, Jn. 3:27-36:
  - 1. John the Baptizer answered the messengers about Jesus' greater following not with a jealous attitude, but with the humble admission that he as a mere man could receive nothing of a following in Israel except it were given him from God above Who was in heaven, John 3:27.
  - 2. John added that his hearers themselves had previously heard him confess that he was not the Messiah, "but rather" (*alla*, a strong adversative; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 331; Abbott-Smith, A Man. Grk. Lex. of the N. T., 1968, p. 21) that he had been sent before "that One" (*ekeinos*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Abbott-Smith, p. 137-138), "that One" being the Messiah, John 3:28 with John 1:19-20.
  - 3. To illustrate, John likened himself to the friend of the bridegroom and not the bridegroom at a wedding where Jesus is the bridegroom and the people of Israel the bride. The friend of the bridegroom is fulfilled in seeing the bridegroom to whom the bride belongs be the one who is honored instead of himself, v. 29.
  - 4. Accordingly, John the Baptizer asserted that Jesus the Messiah, the Bridegroom, must increase where he the forerunner of the Messiah must decrease in the viewpoint of the people of Israel, the Bride, John 3:30!
  - 5. To make his point even clearer, in John 3:31-36, John theologically explained the infinitely superior spiritual nature of Christ's ministry to his own ministry as Christ's forerunner:
    - a. John explained that Jesus Who had come from heaven above is above all where he, John, like any other mortal man, was from the earth below God's heaven, John 3:31.
    - b. The Lord Jesus Who was from heaven testified what he had seen and heard of God the Father, but most of the people were not receiving His testimony, John 3:32. Those who did receive Jesus' testimony acknowledged that God was true, John 3:33.
    - c. Jesus Whom the Father had sent spoke God's words, for the Father had not given the Holy Spirit to the Son to a limited degree like He had to John (Luke 1:15), but Jesus had the Spirit without limit, John 3:34.
    - d. God the Father loved the Son, what John had heard the Father claim at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16-17), so the Father had given all things into Christ's hand, John 3:35.
    - e. Consequently, John asserted that he who believed on Jesus as the Son of God had everlasting life, but he who did not believe on the Son would not see life, but the wrath of God remained on him, John 3:36.

***Lesson:*** *When others told John that Jesus attracted more people to His ministry than John did to his ministry, news meant to elicit a jealous reaction in John, the prophet John instead exalted Jesus infinitely far above himself, certifying at cost to himself the glory of God the Son in John's greatest testimony of Messiah Jesus in his ministry.*

***Application:*** *May we follow John's lead in exalting Jesus Christ and not ourselves in our ministries for the Lord.*