

John 10 - Faiths Contrasted: John *Baptist's* to Nicodemus'

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John 3:22-36

Perspective

- John *Apostle* intentionally placed this narrative of John *Baptist* here to contrast his faith with Nicodemus'
- Nicodemus' faith based in tradition originally rejected Christ's testimony of His Messiahship, later saved (v. 19, 39-42)
- John *Baptist* consistently points to Jesus as Messiah
- Narrative of Samaritan woman contrasts an adulterous woman with Nicodemus: one accepts, one rejects, truth

Not a Historical Gospel

- John *Apostle* is not writing a historical gospel; these have already been written some time before he wrote
- John's writing is contextual; therefore, he only includes elements to support his thesis: Christ is God's Son
- He does not contradict Synoptic Gospels, he completes their narrative by rounding out their descriptive texts
- Remember: elements are arranged conceptually - not chronologically, ignoring this begets false contradictions

Judean Countryside Baptisms

- It is impossible to place this event chronologically in Christ's ministry except that it occurred before John Baptist was imprisoned and executed
 - Location: Judean countryside, not the Galilean area
 - Aenon (Place of Springs) - Plentiful, clean water supply
 - Salim (Shalom or Peace) - Common place name
- Disciples of Christ and John Baptist were baptizing

Potential for Competitive Conflict

- Two Rabbis performing similar functions in the same general area would usually lead to conflict
 - Between the two Rabbis
 - Between the disciples of each Rabbi
 - Between the followers of each Rabbi
- Indeed, this occurs when a Jew engages John Baptist's disciples in a discussion about purification (baptism)

What Are Jewish Purifications?

- Jews had many various rituals of purification (mikveh)
 - Jews underwent mikveh (baptism) before entering the Temple, also observed by later Jewish Christians (Ac 21:26)
 - Pools of Shalom and Bethsaida provided for this purpose for the multitude of pilgrims visiting Jerusalem (Jo 11:55)
 - This outward purification prepared them to enter the Temple; there were many other ceremonies also (Jo 2:6)

Difference Between Baptisms

- John Baptist clearly stated his was a water baptism of repentance in preparation for Messiah (Mt. 1:4-5)
- Jesus as Messiah would not have used this terminology referring to His baptism, though outwardly similar
 - His baptism, by his disciples, probably emphasized purity since that was integral to His ministry (Mt. 5:8)
 - Thus, their baptisms were complimentary, not opposing

Why Did Christ Baptize?

- As this occurs before Pentecost this baptism was not a baptism of the New Covenant or of the even later baptism of fire (judgment) John Baptist references (Lk. 3:16)
 - I believe this is a transitional baptism looking ahead to the coming New Covenant indwelling Spirit baptism
 - Jews would have understood and accepted this
 - Looked ahead to inner purity gained by indwelling Spirit (1Pe. 3:3; 1Co. 6:19-20)

Jew Asks a Question of Clarification

- A Jew asks John Baptist's disciples to elucidate the differences between baptisms: theirs & Christ's
 - Purification (καθαρισμός) - Made clean by His blood (1Pe. 1:22; 1Jo. 1:7)
 - They obviously could not answer the question so they go to John Baptist to provide the answer, as they should
- This segues into John Baptist's dialogue, the intent of John Apostle's writing

John *Baptist's* Disciples - Conflict

- The Jew asks about differences between their baptism and Christ's disciples; however, they complain to John *Baptist* that Christ's ministry is competing with *his*
 - John *Baptist* corrects them pointing out all ministries come directly from God, not from man
 - Thus, John *Baptist's* ministry was transitional, alerting people to the coming of the Messiah & New Covenant

John *Baptist's* Ministry Completed

- With the baptism of Christ, witnessing that He is the Messiah, John *Baptist's* ministry begins to fade away
 - He exhibits submission to God's will, as does Christ, making him an example for Christians also (1st 2:18)
 - He repeats the point of his ministry: Announcing Messiah; that is, he is not Messiah
 - He has already sent some of his disciples to Christ (1st 1:35-37)

Metaphor of Jewish Wedding

- We studied ancient Jewish wedding metaphor in detail in our lesson on the Cana Wedding (John 05 - Messiah's First Sign)
 - John *Baptist* likens himself to the *friend of the bridegroom*
 - This *friend* (best man today) would wait outside the bridal chamber to listen for the voice of the bridegroom
 - When the bridegroom announced the marriage consummated the *friend* would make the announcement to the wedding guests and celebrations would begin

John *Baptist* Waiting for Christ

- John *Baptist* not only announces his submission to God, and to His Son, Messiah; he also implies that he is waiting for Christ to announcement completion of His ministry, which he will not hear due to his death (Mt 14:1-12)
- This shows John *Baptist* did not conceptualize Christ's coming death for sin: "It is finished" (Jn 19:28-30)
- This accounts for John *Baptist*'s question to Christ, if He was the one or would there be another? (Jn 7:18-26)

John *Baptist* Admission

- John *Baptist* clearly tells his disciples that he is from below, from the earth and speaks only of earthly faith
- Christ talked to Nicodemus only of earthly faith and this teacher of Israel did not understand His ministry (Jn 3:12)
- This shows that one could understand Christ's ministry only if it were revealed to him, or her, by God but it could not be grasped simply by man's reasoning

Christ is from Above

- John *Baptist* reinforces Messiah is from above, from God, and speaks from absolute knowledge
- Yet, His testimony is routinely rejected by those who have been steeped in His word for over a millennium
- But, whoever receives His testimony shows that Christ's words are true
- Jesus speaks the Father's words because He has the Spirit of God without limitation (*χαρίσμα*) (Jn 11:29)

All is Given to Messiah

- John Baptist testifies that the Father has given everything into the Son's hands to accomplish His ministry to usher in the New Covenant; repeats Jo 3:16
 - Whoever *believes* in Son has life; if given belief by God
 - Whoever does **not** obey the Messiah does not have life
 - That person is already judged since all are born as sin
 - Thus, God's wrath *remains* on him, or her (Jn 3:18)

Contrast to Nicodemus

- When Christ's dialogue with Nicodemus ends he remains in his sin as he rejected Christ's testimony
- When John Baptist dialogue ends he repeats what Christ told Nicodemus becoming 2nd witness of truth
- All Christians witness Christ's salvation doctrine as there is only one faith, one God, one salvation (Ep 4:6)

Nicodemus' Darkness

- Nicodemus
 - Educated in Talmudic traditions of Judaism
 - Part of national Sanhedrin ruling body of Judah (Pride)
 - Recognized Christ as Rabbi (man) sent from God
 - Wanted Jesus join him to reach Jews for God'
 - Did not accept Jesus' testimony of his ignorance of God
 - He came in darkness, he left in spiritual darkness

John *Baptist's* Light

- John Baptist
 - Educated in God's word by his father, a lowly priest
 - Outside of traditional Jewish society living in wilderness
 - Recognized Christ as Messiah, Son of God
 - Told all that he was not Messiah, only His witness
 - He baptized Christ in the light as he had God's Light
 - He accepted his ministry knowing his time was done

Reinforces Opening Hymn

- Christ was from God as Divine Son with absolute knowledge of God no man can possess
 - He came as Light into the dark world of sin
 - John announced His coming
 - His people rejected His light preferring their darkness
 - Those who received Messiah, it was by God's grace only
 - Hint of judgment via Law of Moses {Ten Words} (Ex. 20:1-17)

From the Learned to the Outcast

- John *Apostle* emphasizes the divinity of Christ and contrasts two very different Jews with the same truth
- This segues into John *Apostle's* narrative of Christ's interaction with an outcast of an outcast of the outcasts
 - A woman, demeaned by Jewish society against the Law, who was openly in adultery
 - An adulterous Samaritan woman making her *unsavable*