

A Question about Christ

John 3: 22-36

Intro –

This whole passage revolves around one central question.

And that question is about Christ!

During his ministry that was always the question!

Joh 10:23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

Joh 10:24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? **If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.**

This was the question he wanted men to consider!

Mat 22:41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

Mat 22:42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The Son of David.*

Mat 22:43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

Mat 22:44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Mat 22:45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

This is the question that matters!

Mat 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Mat 16:14 And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Mat 16:15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Mat 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mat 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

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Getting back to our passage -

Outline –

1 – The Context of the Question – vv 22-24

2 – The Apparent Question – v 25

3 – The Real Question – v 26

4 – The Right Answer – vv 27-36

In five stages –

Verse 27 – A General Principle

Verses 28 – Specifically of himself

Verses 29-30 – His relationship to Christ

Verse 31 – His Contrast to Christ

Verses 32-36 – He speaks of Christ Alone

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1 – The Context of the Question – vv 22-24

Joh 3:22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

Joh 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

Joh 3:24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

What is the Context?

Baptism!

An important issue.

A very important one to Christ.

Our Lord instituted all the means of Grace!

Prayer – Reading and Preaching the Word – The Sacraments – Psalm singing

These were all practised and prescribed in the life and ministry of Christ!

Note 1,

The importance of Baptism to Christ -

Joh 3:22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

Important in the following –

Why he came to the place.

Who he came with.

Compare –

Mar 1:38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

Note 2,

The Centrality of Baptism in the ministry of John –

Joh 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

We are not sure where these places were.

But more importantly

“because there was much water there”

Listen to Calvin –

“From these words, we may infer that John and Christ administered baptism by plunging the whole body beneath the water;

though we ought not to give ourselves any great uneasiness about the outward rite, provided that it agree with the spiritual truth, and with the Lord's appointment and rule."

Note 3,

An interesting footnote –

Joh 3:24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

2 – The Initial or Apparent Question – v 25

Joh 3:25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

Calvin -

Not without a good reason does the Evangelist relate that *a question arose from the disciples of John; for just in proportion as they were ill-informed about doctrine, they are so much the more eager to enter into debate, as ignorance is always bold and presumptuous.*

How does this apply to internet debating?

3 – The Real Question – v 26

Joh 3:26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

In other words,

The question in their mind was –

How would this fact effect John?

Was he just an ego-maniac?

Was he a self-server?

How would he respond to a change of popularity?

Note, the little prod –

“to whom thou barest witness”

So,

How does John respond?

Lets see -

4 – The Right Answer – vv 27-36

In five stages –

I - A General Principle

Joh 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

This can apply to John or Christ or Anyone!

This must rule our attitude!

Compare –

Four messengers come to Job –

Messenger 1 – The Sabeans have taken your Oxen and Asses and killed your servants!

Messenger 2 – The Fire of God has consumed your Sheep and servants!

Messenger 3 – The Chaldeans have taken your Camels and killed your servants!

Messenger 4 – A Great Wind has destroyed the house where your Sons and daughters were and killed them!

How does Job respond?

Job 1:20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Compare also -

1Co 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

II - Specifically of himself

Joh 3:28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

In other words,

I have never claimed this for myself.

You heard me!

I am His servant!

See John 1: 19-27

Note,

John knew his place and calling and this is what protected him from their subtle suggestions!

III - His relationship to Christ

Joh 3:29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.
Joh 3:30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

Ryle, speaking of Whitefield –

“He was a man of remarkable *disinterestedness* and singleness of eye. He seemed to live for only two objects - the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. He raised no party of followers who took his name. He established no system, like Wesley, of which his own writings should be cardinal elements. A frequent expression of his is most characteristic of the man: "Let the name of George Whitefield perish, so long as Christ only is exalted."

IV – His Contrast to Christ

Joh 3:31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

Compare –

Joh 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

V – Christ Alone

Joh 3:32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

Joh 3:33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

Joh 3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*.

Joh 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

Joh 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

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Note,

John is consumed with the Glory of Christ!

He is –

Glorious in His person – verse 31

Glorious in His Testimony – verses 32-33

Glorious in His Anointing – verse 34

Glorious in His Possessing – verse 35

Glorious in His Position – verse 36

(John Owen, in volume one of his works, writes 16 discourses on the Glory of Christ!)

App –

The only way for us to avoid the sin of self-absorption is to be overwhelmed with the glory of Christ!

May the Lord bless His word to our souls.

Amen.